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A  
CANDID EXAMINATION

O F T H E

Rev. Mr. *Hutchison's Animadversions:*

*Will:* W H E R E I N *Mitchell*

His OBJECTIONS to *Covenanting* are Answered;

1762

H I S

GROUNDLESS CHARGES Repelled;

A N D

His ERRONEOUS DOCTRINES Refuted.

B Y

D A V I D W A L K E R,

Minister of the Gospel in POLLOCKSHAW.

GLORY *not,* and LIE *not* against the truth.

JAMES iii. 14.

G L A S G O W :

Printed by W. SMITH, for the AUTHOR :

Sold by W. SMITH, Glasgow; W. GRAY and R. INGLIS,  
Edinburgh; W. ANDERSON, Stirling; and P. MAIR, Falkirk.

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MDCCLXXXII.

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON  
FROM ITS INSTITUTION IN 1660

TO THE PRESENT TIME  
BY JOHN WALLIS

ESQ; F.R.S. &c.  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES  
THE SECOND

LONDON  
Printed by J. Sturges, in Pall-mall

1751  
MDCCLII

WALLIS

Printed by J. Sturges, in Pall-mall  
1751



T O T H E

R E A D E R.

**I**T is not improbable, that some may ask, If an answer to Mr. Hutchison was intended, why was it so long deferred? The answer is obvious: It was on the very eve of the summer sacraments before his performance made its appearance; and during that season, I can apply to nothing, except my ordinary office-work, being sometimes three or four Sabbaths running employed at sacramental occasions. Besides, my opponent's allegation, that I am not very much cut out for publishing, is just; and of consequence must have longer time, than these who can write with ease.

My opponent reprobates my stile exceedingly, represents me again and again, as entirely destitute of capacity for writing, and not obscurely insinuates, that he is possessed of talents not to be met with every day. Let the reader take all this for granted. Accordingly a dispute is managed, on one side by the first author of the age; on the other, by one destitute of every qualification for the task: and if I answer every one of his arguments with ease, I



T H E  
C O N T E N T S.

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A

## CANDID EXAMINATION.

## S E C T. I.

*Mr. Hutcbison's* OBJECTIONS to my Sermon on Covenanting,  
*Examined.*

**W**HEN a man is engaged in controversy, and finds himself unable to answer, if pride and party attachments restrain him from retracting; he is under a disagreeable necessity of inventing some plausible pretext, for evading where he cannot reply. This is evidently the case with my opponent; but he is never at a loss, whatever he is unable to answer, it is *dull, nerveless, prolix, unworthy* of his labour, or the attention of mankind.—I endeavoured to write in the most plain and simple manner, that I might be well understood by persons of the meanest capacity; leaving flourishes and embellishments to these who doat upon sounds, at the expence of murdering common sense.

My friend can scarcely find words strong enough to express his dislike of this, and for a very plain reason; the weakness of his arguments is so evidently exposed, as to be quite obvious to persons of the weakest intellectuals. At this he frets exceedingly, expressing the most supercilious contempt.—As the design of argument is not melody to the ear, but information to the judgment, I mean to persevere; and, in the plainest manner, expose the fallacy of his reasoning; and will probably be a worse writer now than formerly.—There is little or nothing new in his performance, only a stale repetition of former un-

B

supported assertions; but as some of them are a little new-moulded, I shall again canvass them, and furnish the reader with a satisfactory answer to every thing which deserves the smallest attention.

The first charge he exhibits, p. 49. is want of precision, because I have not distinguished, ‘ Between oaths that are lawful, because the divine law does not *forbid* them; and those that are lawful, because it *requires* them.’ I have not yet found myself so much straitened on this controversy as to have occasion for any such distinction; but since he has brought it on the field, he may direct us, in his next, where to find covenanting *prohibited* by the divine law. It is a task yet to begin. Besides, he may be certain, that some will require a proof, that there are *lawful oaths*, which are *not required* by the divine law.

The ground-work of my account of the morality of covenanting was laid in Deut. iv. 13, 14. and Ch. xix. of our Confes. Sect. iii, iv. That the ceremonial, judicial, and moral law, included all the statutes and ordinances delivered by Jehovah to the chosen tribes. I endeavoured likewise to show, that Jewish covenanting was a branch neither of the *ceremonial*, nor *judicial*, and therefore behoved to be included in the *moral* law. Till this is refuted by solid argument, which I have no reason to apprehend from my opponent, as he has attempted it without the remotest appearance of success, I am in no uneasiness about the issue of the cause \*.

\* Our author observes, that this argument would prove, that *Transubstantiation* is a moral duty. That the reader may see once for all, that it is an easy matter to turn his ridicule against himself, I observe. It is plain, as sunshine, that my argument extends only to these *statutes* and *ordinances* delivered by Jehovah to his antient church. Before it prove that any thing is a moral duty, it is not only requisite that it was neither ceremonial nor judicial, but also, that it was delivered by *Jehovah* to the Jewish tribes. When he affirms, that my argument will prove *Transubstantiation* a moral duty, it is plain to a child, he takes it for granted, that it was delivered by Jehovah to the Israelites, otherwise, it has no connection with my argument. In order to lampoon a little, he has furnished us with Popery *antient* and *divinely* instituted! His holiness is certainly obliged to him!

A number of eminent divines, have spent much time and pains to fix the date of Antichrist's rise. They will certainly consider him as deserving a medal, for discovering Popery, thousands of years sooner, than ever they (poor dull souls) apprehended.



As I wish the reader to understand our author's reply to my sermon distinctly, I may inform him, that it consists of the two following unsupported assertions.

1. That the ceremonial, judicial, and moral law, did not comprehend all the statutes and ordinances delivered unto Israel; 'a variety of such statutes were given them after this period, which fall not under the tripartite division of their law, p. 51.

2. That the covenant of Israel, 'was an oath of allegiance to Jehovah their King and Lawgiver,' or civil magistrate, as he formerly expressed it; and was not included in any particular branch of their law whatever, p. 50. This is the sum of his reply:

1<sup>st</sup>, He maintains, that the ceremonial, judicial, and moral law, did not include all the statutes delivered unto Israel. He has discovered a fourth division, but furnishes the reader only with one example; namely, the direction given unto Israel, 'to encamp between Migdol and the sea.' This is a sufficient specimen, however, as he informs us, p. 51. That 'a variety of such statutes were given them after this period.' The reader must understand, that our author's fourth division of the Jewish law consists of *diurnal* statutes, or laws of a day's duration; for they are *such statutes*, as to encamp between Migdol and the sea. And that the reader may understand this fourth division distinctly, I shall supply our author's lack of service, by mentioning a few statute-laws of the same kind. 'Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward,' when they were to march through the flood on foot. 'Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people,' when Jordan's waters stood like an heap. To 'set Iyers in wait behind Ai, and in the meadows of Gilboah, and to fetch a compass, and come upon the Philistines over against the Mulberry-trees.' These and a variety of such directions enable our author to form a fourth division of the Jewish code, consisting of diurnal laws and statutes. The reply is exceedingly easy. If there is any propriety in giving the designation of *laws* or *statutes* to such temporary injunctions;—they evidently belonged to the judicial law; as it is obvious they were directio.

how to conduct themselves as a civil body, or nation, and of consequence were included in the usual division of the Jewish law. Besides, it is extremely probable, the reader will be of opinion, that there is no propriety in giving the designation of *laws* and *statutes* to such temporary injunctions; and the usual division no way affected, nor my argument in the least weakened by our author's *diurnal* laws. As his fourth division of the Jewish law is a fiction, I pass on to the second branch of his reply; namely,

That the covenant of Israel was an allegiance-oath to Jehovah as their *civil magistrate*; and he might with equal propriety have stiled it an oath of supremacy, or abjuration. Now, our author roundly asserts this allegiance oath; but where is his proof? The reader is not to expect any; a proof is a cumbersome kind of thing: my friend can seldom submit to the drudgery of adducing arguments; nor has he any occasion for them, as he seems to consider confident assertion, as an irrefragable proof to his followers. He tells us indeed, of a British allegiance-oath, which he maintains would not come under the denomination of law, civil or criminal. But granting him his *visionary* British allegiance-oath, it would very evidently belong to the *civil*, and have no more connection with the *criminal* law, than any other civil statute whatever. Yea, granting you, Sir, that your British allegiance oath would not come under the notion of a law, civil or criminal, is this a proof that *Jewish* covenanting was an *allegiance* oath? Because you can, with difficulty enough, patch up an allegiance oath to suit your purpose, does it therefore follow, that the covenant of Israel was an allegiance oath of this sort? Conclusive reasoning! Your proof is a favour reserved for some future publication.

Although my opponent's *civil magistracy*, and *allegiance oath*, are an answer to every thing respecting the morality of the covenant of Israel; he not only neglects a proof, but does not so much as give the least explication, well knowing he cannot support them. As nothing but the bare designation *civil magistracy*, and *allegiance oath* can be gathered from any thing Mr. Hutchison has advanced; I shall endeavour to give

the reader some notion of the nature of them, from the explication given of them by others. The sum of it is this. Jehovah as the *civil magistrate* of the Jews, promised them the possession of the goodly land, on the exprefs condition of their punctually performing *only the external part* of obedience to whatever he required, whether ceremonial, judicial, or moral. As it is not mens inward frame, but their outward carriage, which comes under the cognizance of the civil magistrate; the Most High, when he assumed the character, like other civil magistrates, did not concern himself with their inward frame, and if the external obedience was punctual, although the devil had their hearts, they had a valid claim on their civil magistrate, for the peaceable possession of the land flowing with milk and honey. Now, the covenant of Israel, it is said, was an allegiance oath to Jehovah, as their *civil magistrate*, binding them to perform this external obedience. This is a summary of the civil magistracy, and allegiance oath; and to the most part, I suppose, the recital is a sufficient refutation. Besides, our author should remember, that although some may explain what they stile, the Jewish Theocracy, in a manner admissable enough; it will never follow from this, that the covenant of Israel was an allegiance oath to Jehovah, in the character of a *civil magistrate*.

I shall now lay before the reader, in a few words, incontrovertible evidence, that the covenant of Israel was not an allegiance oath to a civil magistrate; and then show the absurdity of supposing it was such an oath.

It is plain, as broad day, that to render their covenant an allegiance oath to Jehovah, as their *civil magistrate*, it was indispensibly requisite, that in swearing their covenant, HE should transact with them, and that THEY should consider him in the character of their *civil magistrate*. Without this it could never be an allegiance oath to him in that character. It is equally obvious, that in swearing their covenant, he did not transact with them, nor did they consider him in the character of a civil magistrate, but as a reconciled God, as the LORD their GOD. In the introduction to the first swearing of their covenant, he revealed himself to them in the character of their reconciled



God, Exod. xx. 1. 'I am the Lord thy God,' a plain evidence, that they were to view him in this character, when about to engage, in the strength of his grace, to obey whatever he required. According to my friend's allegiance oath, the declaration, 'I am the Lord thy God,' was just in other words, I am Jehovah thy *civil magistrate*; the credulous Jew may believe it. Let the reader consult the second period of swearing their covenant, Deut. xxix. And, in spite of prejudice itself, he must be convinced, that the covenant of Israel was not an allegiance-oath to Jehovah, as a civil magistrate, but a solemn engagement unto him as the Lord their God. Ver. 12. 'That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD THY GOD, and into the oath, which the LORD THY GOD maketh with thee this day.' Here it is plain to the meanest capacity, that it was in the character of the LORD THEIR GOD that he transacted with them, and in this *very character*, that they engaged to believe and obey him. If our author's allegiance oath were just, ver. 12. should have run thus, 'That thou shouldest enter into covenant with thy *civil magistrate*; and into the oath, which thy civil magistrate maketh with thee this day.' And in the compass of that short chapter, when the inspired penman is expostulating with them concerning their covenant, we have no less than six or eight times the designation of the LORD THEIR GOD, but not a single syllable of a *civil magistrate*. It is truly surprising, if their covenant was an allegiance oath to God, as their civil magistrate, there is never the most distant hint of that character, in the swearing of it.

The reader may easily see, that a man must shut his eyes against the clearest light of the word, before he can give the remotest assent to our author's allegiance oath; for it is plain as a sun-beam, that their covenant was an engagement unto the Lord as their redeeming God. If the declaration, *I am the Lord thy God*, imported no more than this, I am thy civil magistrate, what comfort can we, under the New Testament, derive from what we have been accustomed to consider, as a most gracious absolute promise? Every time we read, or hear of that gracious declaration, in any part of the Old Testament,

and would rest upon it as firm footing for our faith, may not Satan and unbelief suggest, what have you to do with this, since it is only a declaration to the Jews that God was their civil magistrate. How much Christians are indebted to Mr. Hutchison for disenfranchising them of what they consider, as the very soul, sum, and substance of the promises in general, and what they have, times without number, rested upon in particular, as a firm foundation of their faith, let themselves declare.

I shall now point out the *absurdity* of this allegiance oath. In whatever character they considered the Most High, in swearing their covenant, they certainly engaged to perform every covenant duty in obedience to him in that *very character*. But in swearing their covenant, they not only engaged to perform ceremonial and judicial, but all the religious and relative duties of the first and second table of the moral law. These were the very substance of their covenant engagements, and accordingly stiled the *tables* of the covenant; yea, the covenant itself. It natively follows, that if our author's notion of an allegiance oath to the civil magistrate is just, in swearing their covenant, they engaged to perform *only* the external part of reading, hearing, praying, praising, and every other religious or relative duty, whether in a personal, family, or public capacity, in obedience to Jehovah as their *civil magistrate*. On the other hand, the moral law certainly bound them to perform both the *internal* and *external* part of all the very same duties, in obedience to him as their reconciled Father, as the Lord God merciful and gracious, seeing he had revealed himself to them in that amiable character. My friend's invincible argument, has this absurdity in front, obvious to every one, that the Jews were bound by their covenant to perform *only* the external part of all their duties, religious and relative, as acts of obedience to Jehovah, as their civil magistrate: Bound, by the moral law, to perform the *internal* and *external* part of all the very same duties, in obedience to him, as their reconciled God in Christ. To perform religious and relative duties in obedience unto God, as our reconciled Father, is obvious; but to perform *only* the external part of them in obedience

unto him, in the character of a civil magistrate, is absolutely unintelligible.

I am really in earnest, Sir, that I am quite at a loss to understand this two-fold worship; and I apprehend, that most part of your connections are in the same predicament: It is not only above comprehension, as many mysteries are, but it is entirely unintelligible, on account of absurdity in its bosom. You should certainly inform them; for, if they cannot understand the double worship, the morality of the covenant of Israel, must stand untouched, unless they are disposed to give you implicit faith, which you seem to take for granted.

It may be objected, that believers worship God as their Creator, their reconciled God, their Prophet, Priest, and King; but this does not imply as many kinds of worship.

I reply; it does not, because all these are spiritual relations, and the worship external and internal entirely the same. But the allegiance oath to the civil magistrate, includes a relation strictly *civil*, and the worship only *external*, and the reward *temporal*. It was worship different in the *object*, the *nature*, the *motives*, and *reward*; and not only unworthy of an omniscient God who sees and calls for the heart, but unworthy of rational creatures, possessed of spiritual powers, to contemplate and adore their God as the author of eternal life.

If our author should alledge, that he considers the allegiance oath in a different light; I answer, he has himself to blame, if he is injured. I stated several of these objections formerly, and desired him to be more explicit, or his assertions would never be sustained for argument; but he rests satisfied with assertion still, a manifest evidence he has no defence; and I have set it in the same light with these who have patronized it. As I have only unsupported assertions to answer, I shall conclude this branch of the subject, when I have taken notice of two frivolous objections.

I observed, in my sermon, that the covenant of Israel was never introduced in such a manner, as to intimate any new law or statute, which was frequently the case with ceremonial rites. Our author enlarges considerably on this; and any thing worthy of observation, is his asserting, page 52. that



my argument will prove, that the Jewish covenant was not moral, because it was not introduced in the very same words with the moral law. My argument is this, the covenant of Israel was never introduced in such a manner as to intimate any new law or statute, an evidence that it was no positive ceremonial rite. I ask my friend, because it was not introduced in the very same words with the moral law, does it therefore follow, that it was introduced in such a manner as to intimate a new law or statute? The moral law and Jewish covenant might be introduced in twenty different forms, without intimating any new statute delivered. His objection supposes, that there is only *one* particular method, *one* precise form of words whereby a thing could be introduced, so as to intimate that no new statute was delivered. This is absurd enough; and his jeering on this particular unworthy of reply.

He observes, p. 50. ‘ The granting, as our author does, p. 16. that the covenants of Israel were partly moral, partly ceremonial and judicial, according to the nature of the law they respected, furnishes us with a truly new division of the obligation of an oath.’ The reader, by consulting the page quoted, will observe, at first glance, that the argument censured is not mine; I only state it as an objection of anti-covenanters, and answer it. When a man, as is frequently done for the sake of reasoning, grants his neighbour’s argument, and answers it, Mr. Hutchison has the credit to be the first in charging him, with all the absurdities of that which he states as opposite to his own sentiments, and refutes it. Nor is it a fiction, that it is urged as an argument, that the Jewish covenant was not moral, because it included ceremonial rites; the reader will see in the sequel, that Mr. Hutchison himself adopts it, by arguing again and again, that the covenant of Israel was not moral, because it included their ceremonial positive system. If he has answered his own argument to better purpose than I have done, and turned his argument against himself, I am obliged to him.

The reader has now seen, that two *unsupported* assertions, which must therefore pass for nothing, an *allegiance-oath*, and *diurnal laws*, are the substance of his discussion of my sermon

on covenanting. I cannot answer the reader's prejudice, but with all freedom put his judgment to defiance, to understand the first, or make any sort of common sense of the second, to encamp between Migdol and the sea, a statute law. Not a single mortal of his admirers understand them. With equal propriety might he have given them a few sentences of Hebrew, or Arabic, and exclaimed; a matter of easy discussion! They understand the one, quite as well as the other. I desire the reader to lay his hand to his heart, and if he can honestly declare, that he understands the ALLEGIANCE OATH, or can make common sense of the DIURNAL LAWS, I will yield the cause. When an author of distinguished talents, brightened by uncommon erudition, and entirely master of elegant composition, is cooped up in a corner, so that he has nothing but unintelligible assertions to bear him in countenance, and all this by one entirely destitute of capacity for writing, I ask the reader, if he can hesitate a moment to conclude, that his cause must be wretchedly bad?—He demanded, and with much assurance, in a former publication, that if any would attempt to answer him, they should give him argument, and not unsupported assertion. I can appeal to the reader, if I did not keep strictly to argument in my answer; I find little reply, however, but assertion, evasion, and jesting. An observation of a late author, is exceedingly applicable to our author's refutation of my sermon. 'Many controversial writers, says he, expect strict demonstration from others; while in their own cause, they are not ashamed to produce *slanders* for *proofs*, and *jest*s for *arguments*; and thus they *triumph* without a *victory*, and decide without entering into the merits of the cause.' I have had only two bare assertions to answer, and a flat denial was a sufficient reply; but I considered it as requisite to give the reader some notion of the nature of them. *Vox & preterea nihil* \*, was a conclusion admirably suited to our author's first section.

\* A mere sound.

## S E C T. II.

*Mr. Hutchison's further observations considered.*

**H**E desires his reader, p. 52. to contrast a number of observations, with my pretended proof of the morality of covenanting; and no doubt intends, that the reader should consider them as unanswerable objections, although they are entirely of a piece with his allegiance-oath, and statutes of a day's duration. I desire the reader to consider deliberately, the few following plain observations, and this section will prove a matter of very easy discussion.

1. Every public religious vow or covenant, ought always to include an engagement, in the strength of promised grace, to believe the doctrines of salvation, and perform the duties prescribed by the moral law. It is true, there may be a call in providence, to be more particular with respect to some doctrines and duties, as the present truth, and word of Christ's patience; or errors and immoralities, as the prevailing evils of the day; but still to believe and obey a redeeming God, is the comprehensive sum of covenant engagements. Why there should be such a keen opposition unto, such a hideous outcry against an engagement, in the strength of grace, to believe and obey a redeeming God, when at any time he calls us thereto in providence, is not very easy to conceive. This was evidently the case with the covenant of Israel, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.' The ten commandments were the sum of their covenant engagements, styled, *the covenant itself*, which unquestionably bound them to believe and obey their God.

2. If God, in his infinite wisdom see meet, at any time, to appoint positive institutions in his church, these ought also to be a part of their covenant engagements, while he sees meet to continue these positive institutions. This was likewise the case with the covenant of Israel, as the reader may see, Neh. x. 30, 39.

3. If God in his infinite wisdom see meet, at any time, to



reverse positive institutions, and appoint others in their room ; the comprehensive covenant engagement, not only binds them to discontinue abrogated institutions ; but cheerfully to embrace these which God has instituted in their place. When the Jewish ceremonies were disannulled, the Old-Testament dispensation unhinged, their covenant obligation, to *believe* and *obey* their God, not only bound them to quit reversed ceremonies, when God had disannulled them ; but to embrace the ordinances and institutions of the gospel dispensation, when God revealed and required them. To refuse either of these, was to refuse to believe and obey their God, and a direct violation of their covenant engagements. That the reader may understand this distinctly, let him consider the Jews who were living when the Old-Testament dispensation was abolished, and the New-Testament dispensation established ; they were under covenant obligation to believe and obey their God : Now, could they possibly cleave to the *old* dispensation, and reject the *new*, without refusing to believe and obey their God, to walk in his ways, and comply with his will, the very soul of their covenant engagements ? It is plain to a child they could not. Let the reader consider, if the Jews did not refuse to obey their redeeming God when they rejected the gospel ; but this was to violate the very sum of their covenant obligation. I only observe further,

4. That from the preceding observations, it is evident, that the *appointing*, or *reversing* of positive institutions, can never *affect*, much less *disannul*, the sum of covenant engagements, to believe and obey a redeeming God. It is the sum of most of Mr. Hutchison's observations, that because the covenant of Israel, included their positive appointments, the reversing of these disannulled their covenant engagements, and therefore they were not moral. Whereas it is plain, it could not in the least affect their obligation to believe and obey their God. If Mr. Hutchison could prove, that the covenant of Israel included *only* their positive appointments, he would have some shadow of argument ; but this he cannot. For the reader must understand, that Mr. Hutchison and I, are perfectly agreed, that whether covenanting is *moral* or *positive*, it ought

to include an obligation to obey whatever God enjoins. P. 70.  
 ' Mr. Walker replies, if their covenanting was a moral duty,  
 ' it behoved to include an engagement to obey whatever he  
 ' enjoined.' I reply again, says he, ' that if it was a positive  
 ' duty, it behoved to do the same thing.' He certainly does  
 not mean, that the Jews were enjoined *only* to obey positive  
 injunctions; and I ask, if any man can understand, how the re-  
 versing of positive injunctions disannulled their engagement to  
 obey whatever God enjoined? Were the Jews no more bound  
 to obey what God enjoined?

This is the sum of his observations. If the reader would  
 remember this, I have no occasion to enlarge on his observa-  
 tions. For brevity I shall not transcribe them at large, but  
 give a summary; and if I injure him, shall be ready to ac-  
 knowledge.

*Obj. 1.* Judaism was a local system, or confined to the land  
 of promise;—the Christian religion has no respect to one place  
 more than another.—Can the reader discover any connection  
 betwixt this and the conclusion, *therefore the covenant of Israel*  
*was not moral?* I may observe, that it is the covenant of  
 Israel, and not the Judaic system of government, about which  
 we presently enquire. Are you really in earnest, Sir, that it  
 was unlawful for the Jews to covenant without the confines  
 of the promised land? Have you forgot that mount Sinai,  
 where they first covenanted, was not within the borders of  
 Canaan? A variety of their rites were not local, no moral  
 duty is; can you prove that their covenanting was? This  
 observation is just a good for nothing.

*Obj. 2.* The national oath of Israel ceased to be obligatory  
 upon them after the death of Christ.—And the conclusion is,  
 therefore their oath was not a moral duty, because moral duties  
 bind at all times.—You give us a fine flourishing illustration  
 of this remark; and the substance of it is the following. The  
 OATH of Israel bound them to ceremonial rites, afterward re-  
 versed, therefore the OATH ITSELF WAS NOT MORAL. Is not  
 this an excellent proof, that the MORAL LAW IS NOT MORAL!  
 No man, who has any moderate share of common sense, can  
 refuse, that the moral law bound the Jews to observe their

ceremonial rites, for it bound them to observe whatever the Lord required. Your argument is this, their *oath* bound them to observe ceremonial rites afterward reversed, therefore their *oath* was not moral: By parity of reason, the *moral law* bound them to observe the very same rites, since the Lord required them; therefore the *moral law* is not *moral*. A duty being positive, is no proof that the obligation to perform it is not moral. Mankind are under a moral obligation to observe every positive institution or requirement whatever, while God requires it. This is so self-evident, that it could not be an oversight; and therefore must be a designed imposition on the ignorant class of your readers, an evidence of a wretched cause. You should remember, Sir, that although neither the moral law, nor oath of Israel, bound them to their ceremonial rites, after they were rescinded, the oath of Israel contained something more than ceremonial rites. You allow, that whether *moral* or *positive* it behoved to include an engagement to obey whatever God enjoined: But God certainly enjoined them to believe and obey him. This was the very substance of their oath, and as binding after as before the death of Christ. Will mankind believe you ingenious in asserting, that the reversing of the Jewish ceremonies disannulled their covenant-obligation, or set them free from their covenant-engagements to believe and obey their God? This is the very substance of your second observation.

*Obj.* 3. Soon after the death of Christ, their city and temple were destroyed by the victorious Romans. And the conclusion is, *therefore their covenant was not moral*.—He might just as well have told us, that after the death of Christ the Roman empire was over-run by the Goths, and therefore the oath of Israel was not moral. He informs us indeed, that it afforded them a two-fold demonstration, that the oath of their covenant was temporary, like the dispensation they were under. I can readily grant, that it afforded them a providential demonstration, that their ritual system was unhinged; but neither this, nor any thing else, could afford them a demonstration that their obligation to believe and obey their God, the substance of their covenant-engagement, was disannulled. It is the substance



of this observation, that the oath of Israel included nothing but their ritual system, and what he stiles a Canaan establishment; and when these were disannulled, their covenant-obligation ceased, and therefore was not moral. He grants, however, that whether *moral* or *positive*, it behoved to include an engagement to obey whatever God required. Are you in earnest, Sir, that the Lord required nothing of the Jews, but their ritual system, and Canaan establishment? He certainly required them to believe and obey him; and their engagement to this as binding after their Canaan establishment was unhinged, as before.

*Obj.* 4. The Canaan establishment was a partition-wall betwixt Jews and Gentiles; and while it continued, the evangelical dispensation could not be introduced, and the national oath of adherence to that constitution, added great strength to the enmity.—The reader will remember, that the oath of their covenant was not confined to the Canaan establishment, as this observation very falsely supposes; and it was their *ceremonies*, not their *covenant*, which were the partition-wall.—I might pass this observation without further reply; but I have no scruple to affirm, that the oath of Israel did not exclude the gospel-dispensation, as our author asserts, but on the contrary bound the Jews to embrace Christianity. He allows that their oath contained an engagement to obey whatever God enjoined: But God certainly required them to acknowledge the long-expected Messiah when he appeared, and to embrace the more spiritual worship of the gospel; and therefore, agreeable to his own reasoning, the oath of their covenant bound them to believe the gospel.

Perhaps it may be alledged, that this is only taking the advantage of an inadvertent concession; but without regarding it, I reply: Their covenant included an engagement to obey the moral law; it was the very substance of their covenant engagements. But the moral law bound them to quit their ceremonies when God reversed them, to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah when he appeared, and to embrace the gospel-dispensation: all this was certainly required of them, and they had solemnly engaged to obey. Can you prove, Sir, that

when they despised the Saviour and rejected the gospel, they did not transgress the moral law, which they had bound themselves by oath to obey? Their covenant-engagements, instead of excluding the gospel, as you assert, constituted them covenant-breakers, when they refused to believe what God revealed, in direct opposition to their solemn oath.

Your fourth observation only displays your superficial views of a solemn engagement to believe and obey the Lord, as our God, in the strength of his promised grace. This is binding to the end of time, however much positive institutions may be changed. I shall therefore pass it with observing, that you give us another cogent proof, that the *moral law* is not *moral*. You inform us, that the oath of Israel behoved to be a positive and alterable institution, because it bound to a constitution which prevented the establishment of Christianity: But the moral law undoubtedly bound them to that very same constitution, while God saw meet to continue it. If their oath behoved to be *positive* and *alterable*, because it bound them to the Jewish constitution till it was unbinged, according to this sturdy argument, the moral law behoved to be a *positive* and *alterable* institution also, for it bound them to the very same constitution. You should remember, that to believe and obey their God, was the very substance of their oath, which is not an alterable institution.

*Obs. 5.* Duties truly moral can be observed in all places of the world, but with the national oath of Israel it was otherwise.—This is materially the same with a former observation, and the same reply sufficient. It is readily granted, that duties truly moral may be observed every where. But, are you serious, Sir, that the Jews might not covenant any where? It is lawful for men in any place whatever, to engage in the strength of grace, to believe and obey their God; can you disprove it? But this was the very *sum* of the covenant of Israel.—You seem to have invented these observations rather as *play-things* for school-boys, than arguments for men of sense!

*Obs. 6.* The same thing is further evident from Heb. viii. 13. 'Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.'—The apostle's assertion here respects the whole system

of legal appointments, which he had called the first covenant. This observation deserves rather more attention, not on account of being more solid, but more specious than some of the former. According to Mr. Hutchison's own acknowledgement, the apostle does not speak of their covenant, but of a *legal system* which he had *so called*. But being ever consistent with himself, after he has told us, that the apostle does not speak of their covenant, but a legal system, with the very next breath he asserts, that the covenant, the sacred writer speaks of, is the national covenant of Israel. He speaks of it, and does not speak of it at the very same time. In the same page, ' We are to understand the *national covenant* of Israel, or their *constitution in Canaan*.' Was their *constitution* and *covenant*, the very same thing? Very far from it. An adherence to their constitution was only a single branch of their covenant-engagements. You mean the reader should give you implicit faith for this, because a proof is cumbersome.—But, passing such jargon; what gives any appearance of strength to his argument, is contained in verses 8, 9. of the passage quoted. ' Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers.' That the apostle, however, does not mean their national covenant, is abundantly evident from the scope of the epistle; which was to convince the Jews of the excellency of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, above the Levitical priesthood. Accordingly he tells them, ver. 6. that Christ had obtained a more excellent ministry. But Jewish covenanting was no branch of the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood. Besides, it is abundantly evident, that by the covenant made with their fathers, the apostle, in this passage, does not mean their national covenant, but the old-testament dispensation at large. My learned opponent very well knows, that the word may with equal propriety be rendered a *testament*. That the apostle does not mean a covenant in the literal sense, is further evident from this consideration. My friends will not alledge, that by a *new covenant* in this passage, he means a covenant in the strict sense of the word, but the *new-testament dispensation*: and of consequence,



by the old covenant, he means the *old-testament dispensation*, as a proper antithesis. This is obvious to a child.—I shall therefore pass it over with observing, that as far as I know, Presbyterian divines, without exception, consider the apostle as speaking of the old and new-testament dispensations; and they are as likely to give the genuine sense as those who have a party tenet to support. I know very well, that in opposition to the general run of commentators, some tell us very confidently, that the words express *the covenant* which I made, and that they will not allow us to explain them. But if we must not explain what the apostle means by the *old covenant* here spoken of; neither must they explain what he means by the *new covenant*, but understand it literally also; and then we have covenanting express under the new testament, and according to Mr. Hutchison's elegant diction, a feather in our cap. At this rate, no scripture must be explained, but understood literally: *This is my body*. must be understood literally; and accordingly, they are good sensible presbyterian Papists — The reader may judge for himself, whether the general run of Protestant divines, who have no sinister end to accomplish, or an individual, who has a party-nostrum to support, deserve most respect.

*Obj. 7.* Exceedingly pertinent to the present argument, are the words of inspiration, Heb. iii. 1, 2. 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him who appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.' Exceedingly wide of the present argument, is this quotation. To give it force, his first business was to prove that the Saviour, like some in our day, set aside the old testament entirely. But the very reverse was the case; for the Saviour and his disciples also frequently refer their hearers to the old testament, and prove their doctrines from it. The native consequence is, that where any branch of gospel-worship was clear and explicit in the old testament, as was evidently the case with covenanting, there was the less occasion to be explicit in the new. Christ had all the faithfulness of both testaments, and was infinitely superior to Moses.

But if you mean, Sir, as your argument plainly imports, that he could not be as faithful as Moses, without being as explicit in the new testament, on *every particular* respecting the gospel-church and gospel-worship, as Moses was in the old, which is the very soul of your argument; I ask, is the first-day Sabbath as explicit in the new testament, as the seventh-day Sabbath in the old? Is the external part of Sabbath sanctification in general, as explicit? It will be allowed, I suppose, that infant baptism is as interesting a branch of the will of God to the new-testament church, as circumcision was to the old. The old testament lawgiver is clear, explicit, and pointed, to the very day on which circumcision was to be administered. Is the new-testament lawgiver as explicit with respect to infant-baptism? Does he mention it particularly at all? You alledge, that it is a cob-web defence, that where the old testament is express, there was less occasion to be explicit in the new. But it is true, and very applicable to infant baptism. The old testament is express, that infants have a right to the initiating seal of the covenant; God has never reversed their right: I ask, what occasion to be explicit in the new testament, unless impious men have a power to reverse their right, when the Lord himself has never reversed it. The same reasoning is equally applicable to covenanting.

I am not yet done with this observation, Sir; you have not only a peculiar dexterity at refuting your opponent; but it sometimes happens unfortunately, that the very scripture you quote is your opponent. Here you set out with Christ being faithful as Moses in all his house; and it is the very soul of your argument, that if there was a single particular respecting the gospel-church, such as *covenanting*, on which the Saviour was not as explicit as Moses, that he was not as faithful as Moses. But the scripture you quote imports no such thing; there was no occasion for it; nor is it matter of fact, as is evident from the seventh-day Sabbath, infant circumcision, and other particulars which might be mentioned. If your argument proves any thing, it proves that Christ was not as faithful as Moses, as there are many particulars respecting gospel-worship, which the Saviour had no occasion to mention explicitly in the

New Testament, as they are fully exhibited in the Old. You are very liberal in charging others with blasphemy, without a cause; I beg it of you to lay the saddle on the right horse for once.

The reader, I suppose, has now enough of your observations. The sum of them is this, Because the covenant of Israel included positive appointments, therefore their covenant was not moral: But if this has any force, their covenant, including the moral law, is a much stronger proof that it was undoubtedly moral. You have likewise talked much concerning a *civil magistrate*, an *allegiance oath*, a *Canaan establishment*, and a *particular dispensation of the moral law*, which the Jews were under, neither as a covenant of works, nor as a rule of life, or it could not be particular, or peculiar to the Jews. These have been the ground-work of all your reasoning as yet; and you are at no pains to make your readers understand these abstruse mysteries. They behold a stately structure reared, but tottering on the sandy foundation of Mr. Hutchison's bare assertion. Not one of your admirers understand your *civil magistracy allegiance oath*, or that *nameless* dispensation of the moral law. Can any of them adduce a scripture proof of these mysteries? or have you given them the least assistance?—My account of the morality of covenanting stands untouched, till your observations are better supported.

### S E C T. III.

*Mr. Hutchison's arguments against the obligation of public vows on posterity examined.*

**H**E proceeds, p. 58. to consider my account of the obligation of public vows on posterity, and informs his reader, that I urge their obligation on account of posterity, being considered as included in their covenanting ancestors. I proposed indeed to mention a variety of arguments which have been adduced; but not to urge or illustrate them all; and for a very plain reason, several of them have been urged already to far better purpose than I can pretend. I observed



also, that Hof. xii. 4. has been adduced in support of posterity being included in their ancestors. To this he replies, ' Jacob ' in that vow spake unto God.' I suppose this is the case with every one who vows unto God. But on that memorable occasion, Jacob vowed that the Lord should be HIS GOD; and when the prophet has put Israel in remembrance of this; he immediately exhorts them, ' Therefore turn thou to THEY GOD,' agreeable to Jacob's vow.

I mentioned also, Heb. viii. 9. where Levi is said to have paid tithes in Abraham, for he was in the loins of his father when Melchizedec met him. To this he answers; ' Abraham ' was related to Levi and the Israelites as the founder of their ' church.' I mentioned this objection in my sermon, and demanded a proof, that the deeds of founders of churches are more obligatory upon posterity, than the deeds of other godly ancestors. Mr. Hutchison replies; ' When the patriarch is ' viewed as a mere progenitor, the Edomites and Ishmaelites ' might have been said to have paid tithes in him, as well as ' Levi and his tribes.' Can you prove, Sir, that they might not? Levi is not mentioned particularly, because it was peculiar to him to have paid tithes in Abraham, but the reverse; if *even Levi*, who *received tithes*, might be said to have paid them, there could be no hesitation concerning the rest of Abraham's offspring. I shall pass this, as it has already been urged to far better purpose, and Mr. Hutchison opposes it only with bare assertion. Posterity being in the loins of *founders of churches*, which is my friends argument; but not in the loins of other godly progenitors, is likely to remain an inexplicable mystery.

He concludes this particular with a sprightly flourish, that I might as justly plead, that they were all bound to take *wives* from Padanaram. And why not plead it, Sir? it was the substance of the oath which Abraham put to his servant, that he should take a wife for Isaac of Abraham's own kindred, and not of the cursed race of Ham; and was not this binding on them? You give shrewd evidence, that you understand the sound of scripture; but leave the sense to others.

I observed further, that some have insisted, that public vows are binding on posterity, when they are entered into by civil rulers, as the representatives of the people; and Joshua's covenant with the Gibeonites adduced as an incontestible proof of it. It is very entertaining to see how he wreathes and struggles like a drowning man grasping at weeds and wreck, in order to disprove the obligation of the Gibeonites covenant, while the very attempt is an affront to common sense.—I have already set it in such a light, as I imagine must satisfy every one, except these who are under the influence of the most blinded prejudice. All I have now to do, is to answer a few nerveless objections which my opponent musters up. His first attempt is to fix a charge of inconsistency, because I observed, that I did not contend, that public vows could bind men to any thing contrary to the *word of God*: But the covenant with the Gibeonites, says he, was contrary to the express command of God; and yet I contend that it was obligatory. As I must meet with him on this particular afterward, I shall only observe, my meaning is, that public vows do not bind men to any thing contrary to the *moral law of God*. I know, Psal. xv. 4. has been urged; but I have no occasion to insist on it. Now, the covenant with the Gibeonites, was contrary only to a *positive precept*; but the breach of it was contrary to the *moral law*, which binds men to fulfil their vows and leagues. If he can prove that a *positive* and a *moral* precept never interfere, and that the positive never gives way to the moral precept, it will be something to his purpose; but till this is done, his charge of inconsistency is a mere fiction.

I mentioned, Josh. x. 8. where the Lord encourages Joshua to keep his oath, and defend the Gibeonites. He replies; 'This is by no means to be so constructed as that Jehovah, in the case of the Gibeonites, had dispensed with his own law, exempting them from the fate of other idolaters in Canaan.' Instead of dispensing with his *own law*, you should have said, a *particular positive precept*. The reader will observe, however, that Joshua is promised success, in the most explicit manner in defending the Gibeonites, and destroying the combined Kings. If this did not exempt them from

the fate of other idolaters in Canaan, it is hard to say what could possibly do so. I appeal to every unprejudiced person, if he does not represent Jehovah as imposing upon and deceiving Joshua and the princes. He owns that Joshua thought his oath was binding, that the princes thought so, and that they were bound to defend the Gibeonites; and it is an evidence of my friend's singular modesty, to impeach their understanding, when the Spirit of God in his word has done no such thing. But worst of all, Jehovah himself expressly approves, by promising Joshua undoubted success in implementing his oath. If the Gibeonites were not exempted from the fate of other idolaters, Joshua's defending them was an act of rebellion against the command of his God to destroy them. According to my friend's doctrine, Jehovah encourages Joshua unto, and promises him success in an act of rebellion against himself.

It is now time to consider Mr. Hutchison's reasons, why Joshua's being encouraged to defend the Gibeonites, did not exempt them from the fate of other idolaters.

1. 'This would make the providence of God, and not his law, the rule.' This requires a proof, Sir, which you seem to consider as a very ungrainful concern. It was as much the law of God, after Joshua's covenant; as before, that men should keep their vows and covenants. It was only the moral law the rule, in preference to a single positive precept, as works of mercy are the rule, in preference to the positive precept, *On it thou shalt not do any work.*

2. 'Yea, what is worse, it would make the providence of God and his law, *clash* against each other.' The very reverse is fact: it was the providence of God harmonizing with his moral law, in encouraging Joshua and the princes, and rendering them successful in fulfilling their covenant-engagements. Besides, although Jehovah encouraging Joshua to defend the Gibeonites was not a *formal* command, it was the *divine* approbation, which is every way equivalent. The reader may observe, that his arguments suppose, that there was no *moral law* in being at that time, obliging men to fulfil their covenants; but only the positive precept to destroy the devoted nations: a



doughty argument, surely ! A positive precept annihilates the moral law !

3. ' The providence of God embraced that occasion of cutting them off (the five kings) by the Israelites.' Providence embraced that occasion for defending the Gibeonites. The Israelites might certainly have allowed the Gibeonites to be destroyed, if the oath of the princes was not binding ; it was an additional sin to implement it : and providence might have embraced the same occasion for cutting off the five kings in the midst of their confusion, after the slaughter of the Gibeonites : but not a single hint of this sort. Moreover, if the Gibeonites were not exempted from the fate of other idolaters, why did not providence embrace that occasion of cutting them off also ? But instead of this, Joshua encouraged to defend them.

4. ' The Israelites might destroy the whole,—but it would ' have been murder in these idolaters to destroy one another.' Your proof, Sir, that it would have been murder for the Gibeonites to defend themselves, and slaughter the assaulting kings. You have forgot common sense.—The question is not, what right these idolaters had to destroy one another ; but if Joshua's oath was not binding, would he have been chargeable with murder had he suffered them to be destroyed ? They were evidently about to destroy one another ; had providence no right to suffer them to do so ? Had the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, who came against Jehosaphat, any right to destroy one another, more than the seven devoted nations ? It is abundantly evident, however, that providence had a holy hand in their destroying each other. ' The Lord set ambushments ' against the children of Ammon,' &c. 2 Chron. xx. But here, according to my friend's argument, Joshua must be sent forth with his army, in order to prevent these idolaters from being guilty of murdering one another.

These are his arguments to prove, that the covenant of the Gibeonites was not binding, and when one begins to canvass them, they remind him of Æneas grasping the apparition of his beloved Creusa.

I mentioned also, 2 Sam. xxi. at the beginning. His observations on this are still more trifling, if any thing can be so.

‘ In this passage, says he, we have a short history of the Gibeonites, what they were, and what they were not, and what had been transacted between them and the Israelites.’ But for what end, Sir, have we this short history; is it a piece of mere entertainment? The Spirit of God informs us expressly, that the famine was sent because Saul sought to slay the Gibeonites. It was very natural to ask, Who were these Gibeonites, whose cause the Lord thus espoused? It is answered; They were not of the children of Israel, but of the residue of the Amorites. It was still more natural then to ask, Was it not Saul’s duty to slay them; and why visit with famine for Saul doing his duty? The answer is plain and pointed, ‘ the children of Israel had sworn to them,’ and it was direct violation of solemn engagements for Saul to attempt to injure them. You inform your reader, that I might as well have urged the expression, ‘ the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel,’ &c. as a proof of covenant obligation — You are a little mistaken; for, it is plain to a demonstration, that ‘ the children of Israel had sworn to them,’ is assigned as the reason why it was unlawful to slay them. It appears evident to me, that no man, who is not blinded with prejudice, can read the passage, without laughing at your childish comment.

He adds, ‘ To me it appears not improbable, that the Gibeonites became proselytes to the religion of Israel, when the covenant was made with them, or about that time.’—I am not very much concerned about our author’s *probabilities*. To me it appears very probable, that if they were proselytes, the Spirit of God would have given us a very different account of them 2 Sam. xxi. 2. It would have run thus, *They were proselytes to the religion of Israel*, and Saul sought to slay them; assigning their being *proselytes* as the reason why it was unlawful to slay them. But instead of this, it runs, *The children of Israel had sworn to them*; assigning their oath as the reason, why it was unlawful to destroy them. I am no way concerned whether they were proselytes or not, since the oath of the children of Israel is evidently mentioned, as the reason why it was unlawful to touch them. I must not, however, withhold

from the reader the reasons of our author's probability, that the Gibeonites were proselytes.

1. ' They seem to have been moved by the fame of the God of Israel; so they express themselves, Josh ix. 9. *From a very far country thy servants are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God; for we have heard of the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt.* It is plain, as a sun-beam, that all this was mere pretence to impose upon Joshua and the princes; the Spirit of God evidently classes it with the other branches of their guile: and it was just as true as that *they came from a far country.* To use my friend's own dialect, he might *just as well* have asserted, that it was not improbable they were proselytes, because they had clouted shoes on their feet, and mouldy provision in their vessels; for this, and the fame of the God of Israel, was entirely of a piece with them; a downright imposition. They were just moved, like the rest of the Canaanites, through fear of their life, although they conducted themselves more craftily; and as soon as their life was secured by solemn oath, they frankly acknowledge it. The crafty Gibeonites are much more candid than their advocate. Josh. ix. 22, 24. ' And Joshua spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us?—And they answered,— We were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.' Not a word now of the *fame of the God of Israel*; but *fear of their life*: they candidly acknowledge the truth. You might as well have asserted, Sir, that they were Scotch Highlanders, or St. Ninian's Relievers; their being moved with the fame of the God of Israel is as cogent a proof of the one as of the other. I should not have insisted on this reason of probability, if you had not asserted, that it was a *lucky circumstance* for me, that I did not rest the cause on the Gibeonite's covenant. I can freely ask the reader, if he understands what *misluck* would have befallen me although I had? When one of your uncommon abilities, is reduced to such feeble ridiculous arguments, the reader can be at no loss to judge which of us have truth on our side.

2. ' It can scarcely be thought, that Joshua and the Israelites would permit the Gibeonites to practise idolatry among them.



He has forgot, that Joshua and the princes were so ignorant, as to imagine, that on account of their oath, it was unlawful to touch them. And although they restrained them from the open practice of idolatry, it does not follow, that they admitted them as proselytes. Nor does it follow, that the Gibeonites would embrace the Jewish religion, although they were restrained. Besides, he ought to have furnished us with a proof, if the oath of the princes was not binding, that admitting them as proselytes was consistent with the express command which he urges for their destruction. This reason of probability is lame on all sides.

3. ' Being connected with the victorious Israelites, as their servants, and under their power, they would, it is reasonable to think, soon embrace their religion.'—But why so reasonable to think so? From Joshua to David, the victories of Israel were neither very frequent, nor of long continuance. Besides, did the Papists in Britain soon embrace the religion of the victorious Protestants, even before they were allowed the free exercise of their own? No, verily.—Your reasons of probability are of very little weight. He adds,

' Now, if this was the case, Saul's wicked zeal in butchering the worshippers of the God of Israel, fully accounts for the famine,' &c. This is expressed with more than usual caution, *if this was the case*; and it was very requisite, for it is the plain import of it, if the scripture is wrong in assigning the violating the oath of Israel as the cause of the famine, and my reasons of probability just. But if this was the case, that they were proselytes, it is an incontestible proof that the oath of the princes was binding. If it was the case, to slay the Gibeonites was in fact a butchering the worshippers of the God of Israel; but the Spirit of God does not assign this, but the *violating of the oath of Israel*, as the cause of the famine. He adds,

' It was only a civil covenant.' I stated this objection in my sermon, p. 20. and answered it; and as he gives no reply, I refer the reader to what is there suggested.—These are his objections to the Gibeonites covenant: to deny its obligation, is an evidence of considerable fortitude; and being able to

muster up such a number of assertions against it, although destitute of argument, an evidence of distinguished talents; for no man can read Josh. ix with 2 Sam. xxi. and entertain the remotest suspicion of its obligation.

It has likewise been urged, that public vows are binding by way of *motive* and *excitement*. To this he answers: 'You should first have proved, Sir, better than you have done, that such examples are required by the moral law.' Till you favour us, Sir, with something like argument to disprove these examples, which you have not done as yet, you deserve no reply.

I urged it likewise as a proof of covenant obligation, that Jehovah denounces dreadful *judgments* against Israel for violating the covenant of their fathers. He replies, that the national covenant of Israel, 'was made not only with these who first entered into it in Moab, but with every generation of their posterity.' And quotes Deut. xiii. 14, 15. By consulting the passage, the reader will see, at first glance, that there is not the remotest hint of the covenant being made with every generation; it is only a plain injunction to destroy idolaters, agreeable to one branch of their covenant engagements. It was likewise necessary to have informed us, how the covenant in the plains of Moab was made with every generation: They had not a being as yet; perhaps they were considered as included in their covenanting ancestors. But agreeable to his comment on Levi paying tithes in Abraham, even their being included in their covenanting ancestors, could not render the covenant obligatory, unless all the covenanters in Moab's plains were founders of churches. The scripture he quotes, is a plain declaration, that covenants are *binding* on posterity; and his asserting, that it is impertinent to apply this to Christians, is only an impertinent begging of the question. He leaves this argument just as he found it.

As much of the same import with the former argument, I urged covenant obligation on posterity, because the *word of God* expressly declares it. Deut. xiii. 14, 15. and xxix. near the close; and a variety of other scriptures.

On this particular I adduced, Jer. xxxv. concerning the Rechabites obeying the command of Jonadab their father, hundreds of years after, and Jehovah approving. He replies; 'The Rechabites only obeyed the fifth commandment, in obeying the mandate of their father Jonadab; and who denies the obliging force of this command?' This is the very substance of all I contend for. He readily grants, that the simple *mandate* of a progenitor, is *obligatory* on his offspring, hundreds of years after, in virtue of the *fifth* command; for commentators allow, and it will not easily deny, that Jonadab lived many hundreds of years before this time. Now, if the simple mandate of progenitors is binding on their offspring, hundreds of years after, in virtue of the fifth command, supposing them to deliver this mandate in the way of a *solemn vow*, would this disannul the binding force of the fifth command? Can the reader understand how it should? It is all a matter to me, whether it is the *first* or *fifth* command which renders the mandates and vows of progenitors obligatory, since the *word of God* declares they are so. Instead of refuting this argument, he expressly grants it, and supports it to far better purpose than I had done. He indeed chuses his own way of fixing covenant obligation; and I have no quarrel with him: we are for once quite agreed, that *vows* and *covenants* are *binding on posterity*.—I observed, that there might be a vow in the case of Jonadab, although it is not expressly mentioned. On this he remarks, in his usual spirited manner, 'his ponderous argument has ended in a *may be*.' Although this were true, Sir, it might nearly ballance your *not improbable*; one of your ponderous arguments in the preceding page. You are, however, a little mistaken; for I said, and say it again, that my argument is even more forcible without, than with a vow. If the fifth command bind to the simple injunction, it must certainly bind to the solemn vow. †

† I am much indebted to you, Sir, for your valuable piece of information, that I might as well have said, that the Judicial Testimony was there. Only, with submission to your superior judgment, the similitude would have been much more *striking*, had you said the *Relief Testimony*; for, if it was not there, to this day it has been no where else in the world, that any man knows of.



I insisted particularly, that the religious covenants of ancestors are binding on their offspring, because in the very nature of *church fellowship*, when posterity are admitted to sealing ordinances, they voluntarily come under the same engagements with these by whom they are admitted. To this, he replies, 'No, Sir, the primitive church of Rome, did not view the Jewish converts, as coming under her obligations, in the article of ceremonial usages, when she admitted them as members.' My friend is very prudent on this particular. Mr. Ramsay had answered him on the xivth of the Romans, in a very judicious, but in a pretty general manner: I inadvertently on every particular of his paraphrase and deductions, and did not expect he would attempt an answer. Accordingly, when he meets with Mr. Ramsay, he challenges him very confidently for overlooking his paraphrase and deductions; but when I come in his way, he has already answered Mr. Ramsay, a far better writer. Accordingly, a magisterial, unanswerable *No, Sir*, is all the reply. Your comment on the xivth of the Romans, is so inconsistent, that every cursory glance presents new absurdities; and as it is the only pillar to support your terms of communion, I mean yet to vex you a little.

You talk of their admitting these Jewish converts; how do you know, that they did really admit them? Where is your proof? You will probably reply, the apostle expressly enjoined *them*, ver. 1. Very well. Did not the apostle as expressly enjoin them to consider the *controverted point*, to use the language of the paraphrase, as a matter of indifference, ver. 5.? Will you pretend to give a more concise, and pointed description of a thing indifferent, than the apostle has done? If a thing is sinful in itself, contrary to the divine law, a man being *persuaded*, or *not*, can never alter the nature of it, and render it a duty. But there cannot be a more pointed description of a thing indifferent, than that which the apostle gives us, ver. 5. that which a man may either *do*, or *FORBEAR*, if he act not contrary to his own conscience. 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,' and let him either do, or forbear, without judging others who differ from him. Now, if they considered the controverted points as things *indifferent*,

it gives no countenance to your cause; for it is not contended that things indifferent ought to be stated as terms of communion: But the evidence is precisely the same; for their admitting these Jewish Christians, and considering their controversy as a matter of indifference, *viz.* the apostle's express injunction.

Now, Sir, stand forth and exert yourself, for your cause is in danger. If you maintain, that they *admitted* these weak Christians, agreeable to apostolic injunction, ver. 1.; you must likewise maintain, that they considered their disputes as matters of *indifference*, agreeable to the same injunction, ver. 5.; and your cause is lost. If you maintain, that apostolic injunction was the *rule*, ver. 1. whether they admitted or not; you must likewise maintain, that the same injunction was the *rule*, ver. 5. whether they considered their disputes as indifferent or not; and you are as far from your purpose as ever. In order to have any countenance from the passage, you must maintain, that they obeyed apostolic injunction, ver. 1. but disregarded it, ver. 5. But who told you, Sir; can you produce a credible informer, that they *obeyed* one apostolic direction, ver. 1. but *disobeyed* another, equally express, ver. 5.? Nay, what is much worse, you must maintain that the apostle's mandate was *just*, ver. 1.; but that, like Joshua and the princes, he was entirely *mistaken*, ver. 5.: if he was not, their disputes were matters of mere indifference for the time, and give no countenance to your argument in the world.

You inform us, p. 39. that to observe any ceremonial ordinance, after the death of Christ, was *mere superstition*. Here you evidently differ from the apostle, who represents a variety of them as indifferent for a time. But you have a salvo at hand, p. 40. they were only indifferent, 'as no religious ordinances at all;' and were entirely unlawful, 'as parts of divine worship.' But when the apostle informs us, Rom. xiv. 6. 'He that regardeth a day, regardeth it UNTO THE LORD:' do you really think, that he did not regard it as any part of *divine worship*? Can a child refrain from holding you up to derision? For, in this precise view, it was for the time indifferent. I would not wish to be uncharitable, but you

really give some ground of suspicion, that you differ not only from all orthodox divines, but that you differ from the venerable apostles also, on this particular.

You have informed us again and again, that to observe any of the ceremonies after the death of Christ, was *mere superstition, error, gross error, a breach* of the second command. If the reader pleases, he may consult Acts xxi. 20 and downward, where the rest of the apostles address Paul, ver. 20. 'Thou seest brother, how many thousand Jews there are who believe, and they are all ZEALOUS OF THE LAW;' namely, the *ceremonial law*, as was evident from their being assembled at Jerusalem to observe the feast. Ver. 23. 'We have four men which have a vow on them;' [*viz:* a ceremonial vow, or Paul joining himself to them would have given the Jews no satisfaction.] Ver. 24. 'Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them.' Ver. 26. 'Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself with them, entered into the temple.'

I may ask my opponent, if the apostles were so *ignorant*, as not to understand *superstition, error, gross error, a breach* of the second command? Or were they so *dastardly*, as, thro' fear, not only to connive, but openly practise these things themselves? No man can read the passage without concluding, as divines have done hitherto, (Mr. Hutchison excepted,) that these ceremonies were for the time indifferent; and that they might *do* or *forbear*, according as *expediency* and *edification* required. Let the reader consult Rom. xiv. 5. Acts xxi. 20. and downward, and consider if it is practicable to free my opponent from charging the apostles with will-worship, superstition, error, gross error, a direct violation of the second commandment. It is pretty evident that you are at variance with the apostles; and I have some apprehension, that if I come in your way again, on this particular, you will have answered some better writer before-hand, and a magisterial *No, Sir*, all the answer I must expect; for whether your terms of communion are right or wrong, they have not the remotest shadow of countenance from the xivth of the Romans.

It is now time to return to my argument. I maintain,



that persons who are received members of any religious body, they become a part of that body, and voluntarily come under the same obligations with these who receive them. To this, an emphatic, *No, Sir*, is all the reply.—I endeavoured to illustrate this, from the consideration of *civil Societies*; and shall give the reader another specimen of my opponent's candor. He asserts, p. 62. 'You argue, that because civil societies require these whom they receive to submit to their regulations, therefore churches should do the same.' Well did he know, that not one word of this was fact. The reader shall hear my own words. After I had stated the argument, I observed, '*It were easy to illustrate this by civil societies.*' And as I could easily foresee his quibble; with a view to prevent all ground of cavilling, I added, '*It will perhaps be said, that this is a meddling of religious, by the rules of civil societies. I answer, it is only an illustration, which the scripture abundantly warrants.*' I ask the reader, if words could more expressly disclaim the charge? And he is prudent enough to give no quotation of my words as the foundation of it. You might just as well assert, Sir, that when the prophet illustrates the godly's mounting on the wing of faith, and other heavenly graces, by the eagle mounting with wings; that he maintains, that *because* the eagle mounts, *therefore* the godly are to do so also. When the apostle illustrates the Christian's striving for the immortal crown, by the striving in the Olympic games; you may just as well assert, that he maintains, that *because* they strove in these games, *therefore* Christians should strive also.—To squeeze and torture an argument, may be something disagreeable; but to charge a man with a well-known downright falsehood, in opposition to his own explicit and pointed declaration, is an evidence of ———! It shows, however, that an argument is considerably stubborn, when there is nothing but fallacy for reply. I cannot understand what my opponent intends by asserting such glaring fictions; unless he is conscious that his cause cannot stand the test of fair argumentation, and expects, in this manner, to dissuade every one from answering him, as incapable of being reasoned with.

He observes further, ‘ a civil society has the power of making its own terms of admission, provided they are not contrary to God’s law ; but the church has no power to make her own terms of admission : these are adjusted by her divine Head.’ In this, we are entirely agreed. I expect you will allow, that the church has a right to demand an approbation of the-terms adjusted by her divine Head ; and we demand no more.

He adds, with usual decorum, ‘ Your Associate Church, however, takes the liberty to make, and to alter her terms of admission, as suits the designs of her priesthood.’ Our Associate Church has made no terms of communion which are not adjusted in the word, and which she is no way afraid to maintain. We could wish, Sir, to see a learned and judicious proof, by some of the Relief priesthood, that terms of communion ought always to be the same, in every situation of the church. It is plain as a sun-beam, that ceremonial rites were no term of communion with Paul at Jerusalem, Acts xxi 20,—26. They as evidently were so at Antioch, Gal. ii. 11, 19.

But, passing this ; I readily acknowledge, that your Relief church has evidently the advantage of us in this particular : She may alter her terms of communion an hundred times, and no man have it in his power to charge her with inconstancy. She informs us, that *essentials* and *fundamentals* are her terms of communion ; but what these are, she does not pretend to determine. Accordingly, at one meeting of synod, this may be a *fundamental*, that a *circumstantial* ; at the next, it may be *vice versa*, this a *circumstantial*, and that a *fundamental* ; and thus she may fluctuate perpetually, according to the humour of the day, her *primum mobile*, and no man ever have it in his power to charge her with deviating from her general rule.

Your terms of communion render the New-Testament Law-giver less faithful than Moses, in fixing terms of communion, of which a whole religious body can give no particular account. We are told, indeed, that *scripture*, *Christ*, and *grace*, are fundamentals ; but we are still as much at a loss where to find you as ever. To go no further than the first of these fundamentals, I ask, is all scripture fundamental ; or do many pas-

sages of it contain *circumstantial*, less *important* matters? We are just as uncertain as ever; but it was the saying of a *good* and *learned* man, and therefore must attract by-a *secret magnetism*, and must be sufficient to these whose Creed is comprehended in the piety of other men. — We are also told, that there are errors *about* the foundation. and errors *against* it; and that the first of these are not *properly* fundamental. I ask, Do your terms of communion exclude, on account of errors *improperly* fundamental, or only for these which are *strictly* so? How loose, and indeterminate still! And why such a prodigious bluster, about *your* terms of communion fixed by the church's Head, while no man can tell what they are? — In this, Sir, your Relief Church has confessedly the advantage; for our terms of communion are published to the world, they are no secret, are not huddled up in ambiguity.

These are his decisive objections, to my account of covenant-obligation on posterity. I have generally had little occasion to support my former arguments, as he seldom looks nigh them: My principal business has been, to refute some false charge, or answer some heterogeneous story, which has no connexion with the point in hand.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Mr. Hutchison's Arguments for the present Performance of covenanting considered.*

HE proceeds, in p. 62. to consider, what he is pleased to stile my *apology* for the neglect of covenanting; and with all the rhetoric he is master of, to support a present call to the solemn duty. I am no way careful to answer him on this particular; his design is too glaring: but as a more pitiable scene has seldom been presented to public view, there can be little difficulty in exposing it, without giving any ground of offence to our brethren. He observes, that to clear my road, I distinguish between *occasional* and *stated* duties. The reader may consider the distinction as just; for my opponent has no objection. I endeavoured also to prove, that there is not a



call in providence, *at all times*, to perform *occasional* moral duties. I mentioned *alms-giving*, which many have never a call to perform; and defending ourselves from the inroads of *public enemies*, in which states and empires may, for ages, have no call to be engaged. Neither of these can he deny: but what, says he, is this to the purpose! Very much to the purpose, Sir; you are still exclaiming, *a moral duty, and never perform it all our life-time*; on this you delight to dwell, because it is a kind of hideous sound in the ears of the inconsiderate. The first is an instance of a moral duty, which individuals may never have a call to perform; and you cannot deny it; the second, a moral duty, which states and nations may, for ages, have no call to perform; nor can you disprove it: what foundation then for your bluster, *a moral duty, but never perform it?* This is all it was intended to prove; and you cannot refuse it.—You inform your reader, that my reasoning may be turned against myself, because we have ‘so many calls ‘in providence’ to covenanting. This, is the very point yet to prove. I would ask it as a particular act of kindness, that in your after reasoning, you would favour us with your premises, before your spruce conclusion.

I observed, that as the scripture is not explicit, with respect to the *seasons* of covenanting, we must judge by the situation of the church; the occurrences and calls of providence; together with what assistance we can obtain from scripture example for our direction. But, as some have asserted, that the church has a power to fix the *season* of occasional duties, independent of scripture example, which seems to be attended with some difficulty, if our circumstances are entirely similar to these recorded in scripture; I therefore observed, that we are not to disregard the assistance which scripture example affords us. On this, he informs me, that I have scripture example for weekly communicating, and why do I not practise it? That I am in a noose, and how I can get out he knows not. Your noose, Sir, is entirely imaginary. It is when circumstances are *similar*, that I maintain we are to be directed by scripture example. Till you prove, that our circumstances are similar to these of the church in the apostolic age, your noose is a

mere figment. Besides, where is your proof, of scripture example for weekly communions? You quote Acts xx. 2. 'And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them.' And because they came together on *ONE* first day of the week to break bread, therefore they came together *EVERY* first day of the week for the same purpose; irrefragable proof! But you have assistance at hand, learned Doctors announce, that this was their usual custom. I little expected, that such a strenuous advocate for the right of private judgment, would direct me to pin my faith to the sleeve of others. Your proof of weekly communions is palpably lame; and I suppose you will not attempt to prove a similarity of circumstances. Your noose has turned out a rope of sand.

His next attack is upon our covenant engagements. The Israelites, says he, swore only to adhere to God's testimonies, as expressed in his own words, but ours are expressed in the words of fallible men.—What connection in the world, has this with the *seasons* of covenanting, the point he is now handling? The reader must always expect, that the point Mr. Hutchison proposes to handle, will engross but a small part of his reasoning. It is true, Moses delivered their covenant engagements in the words of inspiration; but I desire my learned friend to prove, that, in any *after* covenanting periods, their engagements were expressed twice in the same words; or *any* of them in the express words of inspiration; or that we have any thing but a *summary* of them. We are told expressly, Neh. x. that they made ordinances for themselves, which were, doubtless, agreeable unto, and founded upon the word, and included in their covenant engagements: but if the *express words* of inspiration, how are they said to have *made them*? Our covenant engagements are very little affected by this random objection.

We have sometimes heard of *syllabic inspiration*. Of late we hear of something exceeding like a *syllabic approbation* of Confessions; not a cheerful approbation of the doctrine, but of every particular mode, or manner of expressing it, however much it may be *confessedly* abused to the subverting of souls,

and that we must be honest Catholics, and rather question our own intellectuals, than any particular mode of expression used by divines, whose sentiments we professedly approve of. Perhaps my opponent means to corroborate, by introducing a *syllabical swearing* of covenants. The matter of our covenants is agreeable to, and founded upon the word of God; and we never intended to swear to the *syllables* or *sounds*.

My difficulty concerning covenanting at present, was summed up in the two following particulars. 1. These who are evidencing a becoming *activity* in *reformation*, are shattered and torn, reviling and tearing one another. 2. When different denominations covenant, and *forswear* one another's distinguishing principles; instead of *strengthening* one another's hands, one end of the solemn duty, they rather weaken and discourage one another; and that it does not appear to me, that we have scripture example for covenanting in such circumstances.—These things I observed as my own view of the matter, without reflecting on our brethren, who are no doubt satisfied, that they have a clear call to the duty in their present circumstances.

To the first, Mr. Hutchison replies; 'The divided state of the tribes, in Aſa's time, was thought a good reason for covenanting.'—Your proof, Sir. Where is the divided state of the tribes at that time, assigned as a reason for covenanting at all, good or bad? It is a reason of your own fabrication. Besides, where is your proof, that these who were evidencing a becoming activity in reformation, were divided in Aſa's time? The very contrary was the case; with the utmost alacrity they joined hand in hand in the solemn service. I never insinuated, that the divided state of idolaters and the worshippers of the God of Israel, was any obstruction to covenanting; nor the divided state of the Secession and Relief: But the division between us and our brethren, who exercise a becoming activity in reformation work, and will not make the *humour of the day*, their supreme rule, is a far more serious matter in my view; and you give no reply.

He informs me, p. 65. 'Your argument carries much impiety in it, as well as absurdity. If divisions will justify the



neglect of one duty, they will justify the neglect of every duty.' Not so fast, Sir; the *non-performance* of an occasional duty, when there is no call thereto in providence, does not constitute a *neglect*. It is probable, that like other congregations, you have a number who must be supported by the liberality of others; you will surely inform them, that as their poverty justifies their *neglect* of alms-deeds, it will justify their neglect of *every* duty. You ought to know, that the beggar does not *neglect* charity; like covenanting, it is an occasional duty, and he has no call in providence to discharge it. If you alledge, that your argument is confined to divisions; I reply: Suppose divisions, animosities, and heart-burnings, prevailing in your congregation; renting and tearing one another's characters: It will be allowed, to use your own phrase, that this would certainly justify your *neglecting* to dispense the sacrament of our Lord's supper among them, till they were reconciled: Would these divisions, Sir, justify your neglecting to read, pray, preach, or use habile means for their reconciliation?—I leave the reader to judge on which side the *impiety, absurdity, and ignorance* lies: You seem to think that you write for ideots. Divisions justify the *non-performance* of these duties, to which *harmony is essential*; but will never justify the *neglect* of any duty whatever.

In the language of excessive charity you inform me, 'Your grand obstruction is internal.' Who conducted you into the secret recesses of our hearts, to canvass our *internal* obstructions?—You will remember your reply, when you apprehended Mr. Baine's motives were hinted at; and it is expected you will impartially apply.

You inform us, that you have often wondered, that the respectable body of people under our inspection, do not make a point of it with us, &c.—Could I believe this *wonder*, which I cannot, I would answer, That your reasoning on the *seasons* of covenanting is such, as the respectable people under our inspection cannot understand. Would you deign to give them argument, instead of assertion and banter, you were much more likely to convince them. 'They make themselves (say you) a laughing-stock to the generation.' A weighty argument,

surely! But our respectable people, Sir, are not of the same complexion with these, who make the *shifting applause* of the generation their first, middle, and last: and although they should be a laughing-stock, it may be some consolation, that Mr. Hutchison himself has honoured them with *his* company, as much as any in the age.

On my second observation, concerning scripture example, namely, that there was no visible impracticability of attaining any of the principal ends of the duty; he exclaims, ‘*pitiable*’ ‘*excuse.*’ A far more pitiable reply, however. His answer consists of three interrogatories; Were not the seven idolatrous nations? The idolaters among the ten tribes? Sanballat and Tobias, visible obstructions to the end of Jewish covenanting? The reader will observe, that my words are *visibly impracticable*: I therefore answer, by asking him in my turn, If these enemies of the Jewish covenanters rendered it visibly impracticable for them to glorify their God, by strengthening one another’s hands in cleaving to reformation? No such thing. *Obstructions*, Sir, are one thing, and *visibly impracticable* is another, and a very different thing: There may be numerous obstructions, while it is neither impracticable, nor even improbable to surmount them, and attain the principal ends of any duty whatever. If your connexions cannot distinguish between *obstructions*, and *visibly impracticable*, they are truly in a pitiable condition. Your answer has not the remotest connexion with my argument.—I maintain, that there was no *visible* impracticability of scripture covenanters attaining the end of the solemn duty. O say you, they had *obstructions*. Excellent reasoning! Could you ever expect it to impose on a child?

You inform me, that if my reasoning is just, the ministers who swore the bond at Stirling were perjured; and declaim on the excommunication.—I see you wish me to wrangle with our Brethren; but you will certainly be disappointed. According to your doctrine, it was an unlawful oath; and however sinful to make it, still more sinful to keep it: but when you prove, that covenanters engage to stand by one another, altho’ they should differ so widely in their judgment afterward, that



cannot be members of the same religious body, it will be something to your purpose; but you have reserved it for an after publication.

He concludes his proof of a present call to covenanting, by asserting, that whatever constitutes a call to fasting, must likewise constitute a call to covenanting; and, that I see it my duty to fast, and why not to covenant?—I reply: Samuel was convinced of a call to fasting, 1 Sam. vii. 6. but no account of covenanting. Jehoshaphat also fasted, but did not apprehend that he had a call to covenanting. He alledges my people are blinded; and he may be certain they are so blinded, that in their view, the example of the venerable Seer and pious Prince, will much more than counter-balance all the quibbling he is master of. They have so much penetration left, however, as easily to discover, that they have only his bare assertion, that a call to fasting and covenanting are the same, and scripture example evidently against him. He cannot understand how any who maintain covenanting, can refuse a present call to it, because heavy judgments are inflicted, and further judgments threatened. It is a matter of very little moment to me, whether he understand it or not. It is allowed, on all hands, that covenanting was an unquestionable duty under the Jewish dispensation. The reader may cast his eye on 1 Sam. vii. where heavy judgments had been inflicted, and judgments still threatened, a numerous and victorious army drawing near to battle: The prophet saw a call to fasting, but none to covenanting.

He concludes this section with informing his reader, that he and I agree in two particulars; and he is exceeding happy in the unanimity. The first article of unanimity is founded on my acknowledging, that my views of the importance of covenanting might be deficient: This, says he, is very true. The reader will allow, that I maintain covenanting to be an unquestionable *moral* duty; but Mr. Hutchison views it in a still more important light: accordingly he is a staunch covenanter. It is no easy matter for a man to imprison the truth in unrighteousness.—His second branch of unanimity, is founded on my lamenting, that we do not walk up to our covenant-engagements; and that it may justly be said of us, *What do ye more*



*than others?* In these sentiments, says he, I entirely agree with him. Simpletons will blab out the truth without intending it. I never imagined that a reverend clergyman would jeer at his neighbour for lamenting, that gospel-hearers do not walk up to their principles. To lament that the practice of his hearers does not correspond with their principles, is acting the part of a simpleton; and therefore, his principles must either be wretchedly bad, or he can observe no such thing as public falling. Had he been a profane profligate, or an open rake, it was what might have been expected.

I have now, Sir, considered your arguments for the present performance of covenanting, such as they are. Through the whole of this section, you are a rigid covenanter. Are you not convinced, that you make truly an odd figure, in reviling covenanting as a branch of Popish will-worship, but expatiating on the calls and seasons of performing it? You will perhaps reply, that you only take my principles, and argue from them. This is just like a blind man taking colours for granted, and declaiming at no allowance concerning them — You will allow me, to conclude this section, with using one of your own phrases, it is a *lucky* circumstance for me, that I have Mr. Hutchison to answer on the seasons of covenanting, and not any of our brethren who differ from us; it has rendered the task extremely easy.

#### S E C T. V.

*Mr. Hutchison's Arguments against covenanting considered.*

**H**E proposes, p. 68. a further canvassing of my sentiments on covenanting; while it is only a defence of his former arguments against it, a piece of service extremely needful. As several of his arguments are of the less important kind; I shall answer these very shortly, that I may be more particular on these which may be reckoned fundamental. In his former publication, he sets out with laying it down as a first principle, that every thing *positive* under the Old Testament was abrogated under the new. This I positively refused, and observed, that a seventh part of our time dedicated to the

worship of God is *positive*, and binding to the end of time. He replies. ' Were this doctrine true, the Sabbath could never have been changed from the seventh, to the first day of the week.' For this, we have only Mr Hutchison's bare assertion, an evidence he has nothing better to offer. It is a downright contradiction to himself. Every thing *positive*, says he, under the old testament, was abrogated under the new; but if a seventh part of our time devoted to the worship of God was *positive*, it could not so much as be changed from one day of the week to another, while, according to his own first principle, its being *positive* was the very reason why it might be changed. To return your own compliment, Sir, you certainly deserve a medal from the patrons of inconsistency.—The reader will observe, that he expressly asserts, that a *seventh part* of our time, or *one whole day in seven*, dedicated to the worship of God, is not *positive* but *moral*, like other branches of the moral law, founded not *in the will*, but in the *nature and perfections of God*. This is the very sum of his assertion. Now, Sir, stand forth like a man, and favour the generation with your learned proof of the connection between the *nature and perfections of God*, and a *seventh part* of our time; while there can be no connection betwixt the divine perfections, and a *sixth* or *eight* part of it. If it is not *positive*, as you assert, it must be *moral*, and the result of his divine perfections. What divine perfection is it, which is more connected with a *seventh*, than with a *sixth*, or *tenth* part of our time?—A controversial writer is *loose* enough when even his opponent cannot refrain from blushing at his absurdity. Did it ever enter any man's head till now, that a seventh part of our time, set apart for the worship of God, was founded in his perfections; when it is obvious to persons of the weakest capacity, that it is *positive*, resulting from his will? Had he seen meet, he might have required a much greater proportion of our time.

I observed likewise, that although the moral law is founded in the divine perfections, the covenant form of it is as certainly *positive*; the Most High was under no necessity of nature, to enter into a covenant of works with his creature. This he

cannot deny, but answers; ‘ Did not the law receive its covenant form in the state of innocence, before the Old-Testament-church was founded?’ Had he satisfied himself with this answer, respecting the seventh-day Sabbath, which was likewise instituted in innocence, he might have avoided the glaring absurdities I mentioned on the former particular. The reader will observe, that it is these positive institutions which had place in the Old-Testament church, concerning which we now enquire, if they were abrogated. He replies; The law received its covenant form in innocence; an evidence he was resolved to say something, however foreign to the point in hand. The question is not, *when* the law received its covenant form, but if its covenant form is *positive*; if it had place in the Old-Testament church, respecting unbelievers; and is not abrogated, but has the same power over unbelievers under the New-Testament dispensation? Not one of these you can deny. It was a positive institution under the Old-Testament church, and which has the same force under the New. Your answer has not so much as the appearance of disproving it.

I desired him likewise to prove, if he pleased, that the different degrees of kindred, within which it was unlawful to marry under the Old Testament, were founded in the *nature*, and not in the *will* of God. He accordingly attempts a proof namely, that the Israelites were enjoined not to imitate the nations around them in these incestuous marriages; and therefore they behoved to be a breach of the moral law, because these nations were not under any positive law. This argument seems plainly to import, that every thing for which the Israelites were blamed, for imitating the nations around them, was breach not of any *positive* precept, but of the *moral* law. We find, however, 1 Sam. viii. 5. that when the Israelites desired a king like the nations around them, they are charged not only with rejecting *Samuel*, but rejecting *Jehovah* himself ver 7. Is it, therefore, a breach of the moral law, for people to *desire* a king to be set over them? The Israelites might certainly be enjoined not to imitate the nations around them, in any thing which was a *violation* of any of the *positive* laws which God had given them; whereas his argument plain



y imports, that if they were enjoined not to imitate them, it behoved to be a breach of the *moral* law: Be the matter as it will, his proof is quite inconclusive.

I observed also, that to *adore* the perfections of God,—is moral; but to do this by singing the poetical parts of scripture, with certain *musical modulations of the voice*, appeared to me to be positive. On this my friend expatiates concerning MEL-  
LODIOUS MORAL MODULATIONS of the voice, not only on earth, but in heaven also: Much of a piece with the *virtue of a pair of good broad shoulders*, or *the harmony of the spheres*, which some have dreamed of. It must be a gross immorality, to neglect the diligent study of vocal music, incapable of exercising *moral modulations* of the voice.

It is readily granted, that it is a *moral* duty to praise the God of our salvation; but to do this with musical modulations of voice to a set tune, and with particular poetical parts of scripture, still appears to me to be *positive*. Perhaps it may be alledged, that SINGING is a moral duty, because God has required it. I answer; God has required every *positive* as well as moral duty.—The Saviour sung an hymn: I reply; He observed the whole ceremonial law, which was positive.—The apostles practised it; so did they practise baptism, and the Lord's supper, which are positive institutions.—Moses and the Israelites practised it, before the giving of the ceremonial law; so was the seventh-day sabbath, and covenant form of the moral law, before the giving of the ceremonial law: but both of them were positive.—Heathens practised, and recommended it; no mean argument that it was a branch of natural religion: they likewise practised and recommended sacrificing; is this a branch of natural religion? If musical modulations of the voice are moral, and essential to the duty of praise, then the man who excels at chanting church-tunes, excels in the duty of praise; but he only excels in a particular *mode* or *manner*, which is positive.—In a word, to express praise with knowledge is certainly moral; but I know no more morality in Bangor tune, than in a bag-pipe, or set of organs. My friend may consult the last question of his Catechism, which asserts, that we are to praise God in our *prayers*, not by a *church-tune*, but ascribing *kingdom*, *power*, and *glory* to him.

I observed likewise, that *abstinence*, during the time set apart for fasting, is positive, and not abrogated. To this he replies, by asking, 1. If I can prove from scripture, that abstinence from food, on humiliation days, is a positive command? I answer; when he proves that it is moral, he shall be attended to; but I expect he will have the prudence not to attempt it. 2. Do you carefully observe this abstinence yourself, with your whole family, on days of fasting? I am not very fond of acknowledging you as a *Father Confessor*. Sir, although you seem to express some inclination after it. The question is neither what you nor I do, but what is the *divine* rule. It is very easy to learn from your reply, however, that on your fasts, you enjoy all the pleasures of the table. Never more speak of fast-days, but days of humiliation and feasting.

Such are his answers to the particulars I mentioned as positive under the old testament, and not abrogated under the new. 1. The *seventh* part of our time, dedicated to the worship of God, founded in his nature and perfections. 2. The *law*, in its covenant form, having no place under the old or new testament, because it received its covenant form in innocence. 3. The Israelites might not be enjoined to *refrain* from imitating the nations around them in any thing which was not a breach of the moral law, however contrary it might be to any of their positive institutions. 4. Melodious *moral* modulations of the voice in heaven. 5. Humiliation *feast* days.—The reader may judge if Mr. Hutchison's answers have given the least countenance or support to his leading maxim, that every thing *positive* under the old testament, is abrogated under the new.

He now proceeds, p. 70. to defend some of his principal arguments against covenanting; I therefore request the reader's attention till they are a little canvassed.

To his first argument I made no reply, as it has no connexion with the debate. It is the sum of his second argument, that although *covenanting* was a branch of *God's worship*, it does not follow, that it was *moral*, because many parts of worship are *positive*.—On this, supposing, which is not fact, that covenanting is positive, as he insinuates, I demanded a proof,

hat it is abrogated; for every positive institution is not abrogated under the new testament. To this he answers, by asking me, 'Whether the seventh-day Sabbath is binding still?' I reply; One whole day in seven is evidently positive, and binding to the end of time. The reader will observe, that the Sabbath being changed from the *seventh* to the *first* day of the week, is his learned proof, that *covenanting* is abrogated. I demand a proof, that covenanting is abrogated. He asks, whether the seventh-day Sabbath is binding still? Can the reader understand the connexion between the Sabbath changed from the seventh to the first day, and covenanting abrogated? With equal propriety might he have adduced, 1 Chron. i. 1. *Adam, Sheth, Enosh*, as a proof that covenanting was abrogated.

As a third argument against covenanting, he asserted, That the covenant of Israel could not be moral, 'because corporal pains entered into the matter of it.' 'Mr. Walker replies, says he, if their covenanting was a moral duty, it behoved to include an engagement to obey whatever God enjoined. I reply again, says he, that though it was a *positive* duty, it behoved to do the same thing.' The reader will observe, and *remember it*, that Mr. Hutchison and I are agreed in this, that whether covenanting was a *moral* or *positive* duty among the Jews, it behoved to include an engagement to obey whatever God enjoined; and to use his own language, I am exceeding happy at the unanimity: for the undeniable consequence is, that no argument can be drawn against the morality of it, from any thing being included in it which God enjoined. It is the soul of his argument, however, that their covenant was not moral, because it included an engagement to obey what God enjoined; for he expressly enjoined them to inflict corporal pains on idolaters in Canaan.

The reader may try to reconcile Mr. Hutchison's concession and argument with one another; his concession, that whether *moral* or *positive*, the Jewish covenant behoved to include an engagement to obey whatever God enjoined; his argument, that it could not be moral, because it included an engagement to obey what God expressly enjoined, namely, inflicting corpo-



ral pains on idolaters in Canaan. Was there ever moral *pitiful* juggling!

He adds; ' If it was a moral duty, that the Israelites should put the Canaanites to death, and to swear to do this, it was also a moral duty for them to put other idolaters to death, and to swear to do it, besides the idolaters of the seven nations; but this it was not.' Being conscious that his argument will not bear the light, it is curious to see how he attempts to huddle it up in obscurity, and deceive his reader, by blending the *duty*, and the *engagement* to perform it. To put them to death, says he, and swear to do it. Can there be no moral engagement or obligation to obey a positive command? The moral law obliges mankind to perform every positive duty whatever. The duty being positive, is no proof in the world, that the engagement to perform it is positive. I appeal to the reader, if it is not the plain import of this argument, that it cannot be a moral duty to *engage* to do what God requires of us, unless it is also a moral duty to *engage* to do what he does not require!!!—It could not be a moral duty for the Jews to *engage* in their covenant, to inflict corporal pains on idolaters in Canaan, which God had expressly enjoined; unless it was likewise a moral duty to *engage* to put other idolaters to death, which God had not enjoined. I know of none who ever maintained, that there was no positive duty included in the covenant of Israel; but this is no proof, that their covenant engagements were positive.

He adds; ' Whatever oath is moral, may be sworn by all men, in all ages; but it was not lawful for the Israelites to swear to their own system, after it was abolished by the death of Christ.' I have answered this particularly in a former section. It was the sum of the covenant engagements of Israel, to believe whatever God revealed, and obey what he required, and as lawful for them to swear this after, as before the abolishing of their ceremonies. If the covenant of Israel could not be moral, because they might not engage to support their ceremonial system after God unhinged it; the fifth commandment must not be moral, because we may not engage to support indigent parents after God has carried them out of the

world. The appointing or annulling of ceremonies, could not in the least affect the moral engagement, to believe and obey the Lord. It is the sum of this argument, that the covenant of Israel could not be moral, because it included an engagement to obey what God EXPRESLY INJOINED, *viz.* the inflicting corporal pains on idolaters; at the same time, he allows, that though it was moral, it behoved to include an engagement to obey WHAT GOD INJOINED. How hard a matter to render the legs of the lame equal!—It likewise plainly imports, that although the substance of covenant engagements is moral, which was the case with the Jewish covenant, to believe and obey their God, the sum of their engagements: if there was one *positive* duty included in their covenant, the covenant itself behoved to be positive. But for this you have only assertion; a proof was troublesome.—I apprehend the reader will allow, that the morality of the Jewish covenant is very little affected by such unsupported assertions.

He had urged it as a fourth argument against the morality of the covenant of Israel, that ‘it was enjoined to that people alone.’ I observed, that I could not well understand the force of this argument. He replies, ‘Why then does he attempt to confute that which he does not understand?’ Patience, Sir; whatever opinion you may entertain of yourself, you may be very certain, that I am under no apprehension of your getting out of my sight. If a man can measure your bantering surface, he can be at no loss to sound your depth; generally speaking, a child may wade. It was the FORCE of your argument I did not understand; and for a very plain reason, it has none. It is very difficult to understand the *sense of stark nonsense*; that nothing can be a moral duty, if it is not enjoined by the word of God, on all the Heathen nations. The covenant of Israel was not enjoined upon other nations, because it included positive duties, which God did not require of other nations; but this, instead of being a decisive proof, that their covenant was not moral, is no proof at all: for, the moral law, being the very substance of their covenant engagements, *filed, the covenant itself, is* a much more

forceful proof that their covenant was moral. 'The reader shall see presently, that his argument will prove, that believing on Christ renouncing our own righteousness, resting on the Surety-righteousness, are not moral duties.

In support of this argument, he had formerly suggested, that the Heathen were not threatened with punishment for the violation of the oath of Israel. The answer was extremely easy, that according to this argument, nothing can be a moral duty, unless we find the word of God threatening the Heathen with punishment for the non-performance of it. He now shifts his ground a little; 'The Israelites were punished, for breaking the oath binding them by the authority of God, and not other nations.' The answer is still easy, that if the Heathen not being punished for violating the oath of Israel, is a proof that their oath was not a moral duty; it is plain as broad day, that nothing can be a moral duty, unless the word of God inform us of punishment inflicted on the Heathen, for the non-performance of it. If you cannot inform us, Sir, of punishment inflicted on the Heathen world, for the non-performance of every particular moral duty, this argument, like the rest, is mere assertion. Although the whole word of God is positive, as you assert, it is a moral duty to read it, and hide it in our heart, to believe on a Saviour, &c.; but where have we any account of punishment inflicted on the Heathen, for their not reading the word of God, or not believing on the Christ of God? The apostle assures us, that the Heathen will not be judged by the law, or written word, nor punished for non-attendance to it. It is the sum of your argument, that the oath of Israel was not moral, because the Heathen were not punished for the violation of it; accordingly, nothing can be a moral duty, if the Heathen were not punished for neglecting it. A more palpable fiction never entered any man's head, than to state the list of moral duties, from the punishment inflicted on the Heathen for the non-performance of them.

In answer to this argument, I suggested formerly, that it would never be a proof, that the covenant of Israel was not moral, because it was not binding on all the Heathen nations;



or that our covenants are not moral, because they are not binding on the savages in America. My friend stiles this doctrine pretty remarkable' It is doctrine, however, which defy him to disprove. It is a moral duty to read the word of God, to believe on Christ, to believe in a three-one God reconciled through Christ. Can you prove, Sir, that the savages in America, are bound to read the Bible, although they never saw one? to believe on Christ, although they never heard of him? or, that they will be punished for rejecting Christ, although he was never in their offer? If you cannot, and I apprehend you will have the discretion, not to attempt it, how then can our covenants be binding on them, since they include these moral duties in their bosom? And can it ever be a proof, that our covenants are not moral, because they include moral duties, which you cannot prove to be binding on the Heathen? At any rate, covenanting must be stript of morality; the Jewish covenants were not moral, because they included *positive* duties, which were not binding on the Heathen; ours are not moral, because they include *moral* duties, which are not binding on savages in the wilds of America. It is a favour, that all is unsupported assertion.—He expatiates concerning the savages in America being under the covenant of works; but he should remember, that it is not their connection with the covenant of works, but with the covenants of these lands, concerning which we now enquire: and their being under the covenant of works, no proof that our covenants are binding on them. He makes use of a pretty remarkable similitude; suppose twenty thousand American savages transported into Britain, according to my reasoning, says he, our covenants are binding on the rest of the British subjects, but not on the transported savages. But granting your transportation, Sir, what would be the strange consequence? It is exceedingly obvious. Can you prove, that while they resided in their native wilds, they were bound to read the Bible, or believe on the Son of God? You cannot. But it is equally plain, that being transported into Britain, as soon as they could understand a Bible, they were bound to read it, to believe, and join themselves to the church of Christ, and under the same

obligations. Although their transportation has no *amazing virtue*, according to your sensible jeer, their enjoying the means of grace would unquestionably lay them under the strongest obligations to read their Bible, to believe on a Saviour, which you, nor no man can prove, they were under before. Your grand similitude evaporates into smoke. It is true, the nature of the Lawgiver is unchangeably the same; but when you prove that the revelation of his will to Heathens and Christians is the same, and that the extent of obligation on Heathens and Christians is the same, Heathens bound to read, hear, believe, renounce their own righteousness, &c. it will be something to your purpose; but this you will not probably attempt.—It is the substance of this fourth remark, that nothing can be a moral duty, unless the word of God inform us of punishment inflicted on the Heathen for the non-performance of it, the absurdity of which is obvious to every one.

He now proceeds to some less important arguments: I shall therefore answer very shortly. His fifth remark, is a digression from the *moral*ity of covenanting, to the *manner* of fixing covenant-obligation. I am no way concerned with this; I only contend that covenanting is moral and obligatory. He replies: ‘This is evidently shifting the point in dispute.’ He should have informed his reader, with whom it is the point in dispute; I have not interested myself: I maintain, that covenanting is moral, and its obligation on covenanters and their offspring moral also; for the different manner of fixing its obligation, I still apprehend, that it is in part at least a logomachy, or strife about the propriety of words.

His sixth remark, p. 72. is to attempt to assign *reasons why* God required an oath of adherence to his laws from Israel. I still imagine, that this has little or no connexion with the point in hand. But as our author represents it as no inconsiderable argument, I shall show, in a few sentences, that he has not assigned a *single reason* for that oath being required.

It is the sum of *reason first*, That the Israelitish system of government, and their oath was local; but Christianity intended to be the universal religion of the world.—You cannot prove, Sir, that their oath was local; but granting it, ‘could ever this

Is there a reason why God required it of them? I appeal to the reader, if this is not your reasoning, the oath of Israel was *local*, **HEREFORE** God required it of them? Can any man in the world make common sense of it? Their system of government, say you, was local: But how was this a reason for an oath of allegiance? One would apprehend that, if their system of government had extended to the whole world, an oath had been as necessary. It has seldom been thought, that a prince's dominions being extensive, rendered an allegiance oath unnecessary. You have certainly forgot, that you proposed to *assign* reasons why God required an oath.

*Reas. 2.* God gave the Israelites their civil laws; and therefore, as their civil governor, had a right to demand an oath of allegiance from his subjects.—Here you have again forgot what you proposed; instead of assigning a reason why God required an oath, you only attempt to prove, that he had a *right* to demand it. Besides, your reasoning seems to question his right to demand an oath, if he had not sustained the character of their *civil magistrate*. I apprehend that Jehovah's authority over his creatures, to demand of them whatever he will, is absolute, unlimited, and can neither be increased, nor diminished by any *civil magistracy* whatever. Instead of assigning a reason why God required an oath, you only assign a *fictitious* reason of his *right* to demand it.

*Reas. 3.* They held the possession of Canaan, on the condition of professing the true religion, and adhering thereto, as is evident from Deut. xxviii.—By consulting the passage, the reader will see a variety of awful judgments threatened, in case of apostatizing from the true religion; and are not heavy judgments threatened and inflicted on Christians, in case of apostacy? And has not godliness the promise of the life that now is? In all this there is nothing peculiar to the Jews. But granting what he asserts, it is rather a reason why an oath of adherence was unnecessary. The more extensive the advantages, the more ample the rewards annexed to the observation of the laws of any nation; they are certainly in the less hazard of disregarding them, and an oath of adherence less necessary: interest binds them. The Jews having the possession of the land flow-



ing with milk and honey annexed to the observation of Jehovah's laws, it was certainly a very powerful motive, of its own kind, to adhere to them; and an oath of adherence, instead of being *more*, was *less* necessary on that account.

These are all his *reasons* why Jehovah required an oath of adherence to his laws from Israel. Their oath local; Jehovah their *civil magistrate*, who gave them their laws, and therefore had a right to demand it; they enjoyed the possession of Canaan, on condition of adherence to the true religion. It is easy to show, were it not for brevity, that not *one* of them is fact. But granting them, I appeal to every man of sense, if they are the remotest *shadow* of reasons why God required an oath of adherence to his laws.

He alledges, p. 71. That I charge him falsely with maintaining, That all old-testament predictions concerning new-testament worship, are to be understood *figuratively*, and not *literally*; whereas he has only asserted it of *predictions* concerning swearing under the new-testament. It is very possible I might mistake his meaning, as I know no reason for understanding old testament prophecies concerning swearing *figuratively*, more than other prophecies; and Mr. Hutchison has assigned none. As this was no branch of my argument, had he refrained, I should have given him no more trouble concerning it; but since he has again brought me to it, I shall endeavour now to touch the point in dispute, by putting back his own question. Can Mr. Hutchison point out a single instance in the whole new testament, where an old-testament prediction concerning swearing to God under the new testament, is understood figuratively? Nay, he cannot. He makes a noise indeed concerning Isa. xlv. 23. 'Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.' He strenuously maintains, however, that this prophecy does not respect the new-testament church, but the day of judgment; and yet it must fix the sense of all such old-testament predictions concerning gospel worship. By a single glance at his reasoning, the reader will see, that he sets out with old-testament predictions concerning swearing to God *in new-testament worship*; and it is the sum of his argument, that here we have a prediction

concerning swearing at the day of judgment, which must be understood figuratively: therefore all such predictions concerning gospel-worship must be understood figuratively also. Can the reader trace the connexion? A prediction concerning the *lay of judgment* is figurative, and therefore every such prediction concerning *gospel worship* must be figurative. Nothing can be more inconclusive: his work is yet to begin. You will not admit, Sir, of your Brother's lower, and higher sense of old-testament predictions. Although, on several particulars, I must differ as widely from your Brother's sentiments as from yours; his character certainly entitles him to much better usage than you have given him.

It is true, however, that old-testament prophecies concerning the new-testament, do admit of a lower and higher sense. The evangelist expounds the prophecy, Isa. liii. 4. 'Surely he hath born our griefs,' of the Saviour healing the diseased in the days of his flesh. Will you pass over into the Socinian camp, and maintain that this prophecy will not bear a higher sense? After all the bluster you have made about old-testament prophecies, concerning *swearing* under the new, being understood *figuratively*, you do not produce a single instance; and I apprehend you cannot: Is this touching the point in dispute, Sir?

He alledges, that I display a little humour of the dunce kind, in attempting to charge him with Popery. I only maintained, that your rule of interpretation will prove it undeniably. You assert, that to explain one clause of a verse literally, and the next mystically, is a gross perversion, confused, senseless. Nor do you confine it to swearing, as you now pretend. It is to explain one clause of a verse, without restriction either to *prophecies*, or *swearing*. And you endeavour to show the absurdity of it, where one clause of the verse does not respect swearing, but sacrifice. Now, Sir, lay aside the dunce, and like a man of spirit, maintain your very judicious rule of interpretation; and allow, that 'Take, eat,' must be understood literally; and therefore, 'This is my body,' cannot be figurative. Whatever the humour is, the argument is just.

You inform your reader, that I understand an old-testament

prophecy *literally*, which ought to be understood *figuratively*, and therefore Popery may be found at Pollokshaws. You are wise enough, however, neither to mention the prophecy, nor to prove that I misunderstand it: and if your assertion will fix a charge, I flatter myself with the reader's commiseration.

He now proceeds, p. 74. to attack what I advanced on 2 Cor. viii. 5. 'And this they did, not as we hoped. but first gave their ownelves to the Lord.' As I am not yet convinced, that every thing is to be discarded, which is not expressly mentioned in the new testament; I only maintain, that it is *not improbable*, this giving of their ownelves unto the Lord, was by a solemn vow. After our author has expressed a wonderful surprize, and asserted, that my reasoning is confused and unintelligible, he adds, 'As I delivered my sentiments on this passage formerly, and they have not yet been refuted, there is little occasion to enlarge.' I shall lay before the reader, very shortly, the sum of what he advanced, together with my answers; and leave him to judge for himself. He mentions three particular duties, in the performance of which, they might be said to give themselves unto the Lord.

1. By a profession of their faith in Christ, and embracing the spiritual worship of the gospel.—I answer; They had *already* professed their faith in Christ, and embraced the spiritual worship of the gospel. Unless my friend can prove, that the apostle did not hope, that they would continue to cleave to the spiritual worship of the gospel, this cannot be the meaning; for the apostle did not hope, that they would first give their ownelves unto the Lord.

2. They might give themselves unto the Lord in the sacrament of baptism.—I answer; They were *already* baptized; and therefore this can by no means be intended, unless we suppose that the apostle was to *re-baptize* them. I hope this is not unintelligible.

3. They might give themselves unto the Lord in the sacrament of the supper.—It is probable, it is on this particular he alludes I am unintelligible. I reply: Whatever this giving of themselves unto the Lord imports, it is plain the apostle did not expect they would do this *first*, before their contribution



for the saints at Jerusalem. It is pretty evident, however, that the apostle was some considerable time among them before their contribution was made up. He informs us, chap. ix. 2. that he made the forwardness of Achaia an argument with them; and that the zeal of Achaia had a good effect with many of them. From this it is plain, that the apostle was some considerable time among them, and used prudential methods and arguments, in order to procure a contribution for the saints at Jerusalem: This is not unintelligible. Now, our author affirms, that the sacrament of the supper was dispensed every Sabbath. Is it very probable then, that the apostle would assert, that he did not hope or expect, that they would receive the sacrament of the supper all the while he was among them, till after their contribution was made up and given him? But he did not expect that they would first give themselves unto the Lord, before their contribution. Is this unintelligible, Sir? I am suspicious you are not very willing to understand.

From what I have observed, it is exceedingly improbable, that it was any of the duties you mention; at the same time it was certainly some solemn part of worship, and very probably a public vow. On this particular, he attempts to fix a charge of inconsistency, by alledging, that I maintain, that there was no call to covenanting in the apostolic age, and yet will have the churches of Macedonia to covenant, without a call in providence. If you imagine, that I was so blind as not to foresee your objection, you are a little mistaken. I observed, p. 72. of my former publication, 'If there was no call to it in providence in their days;' and, with a direct view to your objection, I added, '*at least among the churches in general.*' You might have spared your charge, unless you can prove, that it was impossible for the Macedonians to be in a peculiar situation; or that all the infant churches, from Babylon to Spain, were precisely in the same circumstances. Till you prove this, I have some appearance of consistency; and your *unseasonable performance* of duty, is a figment of your own fancy.

He proceeds, p. 75. to defend a chain of arguments which he had formerly urged against covenanting. I shall now consider these in their order.

*Arg. 1.* 'Covenanting cannot be a moral duty, because we have no account of it before the constitution of the Jewish church.'—I replied, that they might covenant in a more early period, although we have no account of it. On this my friend spends some part of his sterling wit; but, with his usual candor, conceals the reason of my assertion, namely, that all the account we have of religious matters for two thousand years, may be comprehended in two or three sentences. I apprehend that every one will allow, that there were many religious duties performed during that period, which are not recorded: Can any thing be more ridiculous than to discard every thing from the list of moral duties, because we have no particular account of it in that period? I expect my opponent will allow, that this can be no argument against covenanting; for, after some few excursions of brilliant wit, he stiles one principal account of religious matters in that period an *obscure passage*. He certainly could never expect a particular account of every religious duty, in two or three *obscure sentences* \*. But this is only introductory.

*Arg. 2.* 'The swearing of religious-oaths cannot be a moral duty; because it was never observed by the holy Jesus himself.'—As this is one of his fundamental arguments, he solicits the reader's attention, as he could hazard the decision of the controversy on this one argument. He seems to be conscious that it is a hazard, and he is not mistaken; for instead of shunning him, I, in like manner, solicit the reader's attention;

\* How often does our author assert, that public fasting is a moral duty? Where have we any account of this before the constitution of the Jewish church?—You are exceedingly discreet, Sir, in complementing me so frequently on my *empty Sermon*. I hate ingratitude; but it is troublesome to be always throwing out panygerics on your *messy sentimental delineation*. Once for all, with submission to your better judgment, you have committed an egregious blunder in the title page. It should run, *A delineation of the nature and genius of the RELIEF KINGDOM*. Select your wrangling with other denominations, in support of Relief peculiarities, and you leave very little behind. When the Relief kingdom is concerned, you can nestle there for scores of pages, with pleasure. Sixty pages spent in wrangling with others about covenanting, in support of the Relief scheme; but not one third of them on any other particular. When the kingdom you proposed to delineate comes in your way, it is huddled up at once, as if one had whispered in your ear, *Quick work, Sir; there is little pleasure in this, let the Relief kingdom be defended*.—A more pitiable performance, on such a glorious subject, has seldom appeared in public!

and if I prove not, in the clearest manner, that even, on his decisive argument, he plainly yields the cause, I will give it up. But as he has a variety of particulars for illustration of this argument, I shall consider these in their order, and show, that not a single one of them is to his purpose.

*Part. 1.* Covenanting was only an *occasional positive duty*.— He formerly asserted, that covenanting was established to be a *standing law* in Israel, until the death of Christ. From this I was naturally led to conclude, that he maintained it to be a *stated duty*; because, at that time, he seemed to know no distinction between an *occasional* and *stated* duty; but to display his eloquence in deriding the distinction. He is now obliged, like other men, to have recourse to the common distinction, to extricate himself from the labyrinth in which he was entangled. It is only now, Sir, that you stile it an *occasional* duty; and I am chargeable with fabrication, because you *now* see a necessity to shift your ground, and change your phrases. A weighty argument!

*Part. 2.* ‘Our Saviour was bound to fulfil all righteousness.’ I readily grant it; an interesting truth it is: but, to perform occasional duties, whether *positive* or *moral*, when there is no call in providence, is no branch of righteousness whatever. It is not to *obey*, but to *disregard* the law; for the law, or Jehovah himself by his law, requires us to perform occasional duties, *ONLY* when there is a call in providence. In order to support this argument, it was necessary to prove, that the law of God binds us to perform occasional duties without a call in providence. If it does not, the performing of them, *in such a case*, is no branch of righteousness.

I intended here, to have given the reader a distinct account of what is necessary to constitute a *perfect righteousness*, of which Mr Hutchison seems to have no distinct views; but in his fourth charge of error, he almost exhausts his Billingsgate oratory, in charging me with maiming the Redeemer’s righteousness: I shall therefore pass it here; the reader may expect a distinct account of it in the answer to his fourth charge of error.

*Part. 3.* Supposing covenanting to be an *occasional positive* duty, he (*viz.* the Saviour) had no call in providence to per-



form it during his life.—Here he maintains that the Saviour had no call to covenanting, if it was an *occasional positive* duty. His reasons are: 1. It was one design of the Saviour's appearing, to put an end to the Mosaic oeconomy. 2. The Jewish dispensation was on its death-bed. 3. It would have been evidently acting contrary to the visible course of providence, had our Saviour sworn to support that tottering frame of things.—These are his reasons, and I have no occasion to object to them. He talks like a man of sense, in asserting, that there can be no call to an occasional duty, when the performance of it would be running counter to the visible course of providence. He has neglected one essential point, however, namely, to show that these particulars did not render covenanting unseasonable, supposing it an *occasional moral* duty. Every particular he mentions is just as decisive a proof, that it was unseasonable as an *occasional moral*, as that it was unseasonable as an *occasional positive* duty. It is the substance of his argument, that if Jewish covenanting was *occasional positive*, it was quite unseasonable in our Saviour's time, because it included the ceremonial system, or that frame of things; but to swear to this in our Saviour's time, would have been acting contrary to the visible course of providence. I reply: Supposing Jewish covenanting to be an *occasional moral* duty, it behoved to include the very same system or frame of things. I formerly desired the reader to observe and to remember it, that Mr. Hutchison and I are entirely agreed in this, that whether covenanting is *moral* or *positive* it must include an engagement to obey whatever God enjoins; but it is undeniable, that God enjoined the ceremonial system or frame of things, until the death of Christ; nor does the Saviour reprove them for adhering to it. It is evident, therefore to a demonstration, that supposing it an *occasional moral* duty it was just as much a running counter to the visible course of providence, as supposing it an *occasional positive* duty; since whether *moral* or *positive*, it behoved, in our Saviour's time, to include the ceremonial system in its bosom. I am certainly indebted to my opponent, for proving, in the clearest manner, that the Saviour had no call to covenanting. He allows, that the *occurrences* and *calls* of providence are *one* principal metho

tr judging of the *seasons* of covenanting; and he proves, in the most decisive and pointed manner, that whether *moral* or *positive*, it would have been running contrary to the visible course of providence in our Saviour's day. No argument, therefore, can be drawn against the morality of it, from our Lord's non-performance of it, since he had no call in providence thereto.

*Part. 4.* In p. 77. is to prove, that supposing covenanting an *occasional moral* duty, the Saviour had the loudest calls to perform it—After what he has already advanced, the reader may be certain, that he has a difficult task in hand. His reasons are,

1. Our Redeemer was bound to fulfil the moral law, as a covenant of works, for all his spiritual seed. A momentous truth; his engaging and fulfilling, is the very foundation of a poor sinner's hope, in health and sickness, life and death. But does the law, as a covenant of works, bind to perform occasional duties without a call in providence? Did the covenant of works bind Adam to perform them without a call, and to act contrary to the visible course of providence? Nay; apply your argument, Sir, to unbelievers, who are still under the broken covenant. Does the covenant of works bind unbelievers to perform occasional moral duties, without a call in providence? Alms-giving is an occasional moral duty; does the covenant of works bind unbelievers to perform it, whether an object of charity is presented or not; or whether they are in a capacity to give or not? How ridiculous! If the Saviour had a call to covenanting, the covenant of works bound him to perform it. You propose to prove, that the Saviour had a call to covenanting; and you plainly take that for granted, which you propose to prove; for without a call in providence, the covenant of works neither bound him, nor his spiritual seed, to the performance of occasional duties. Your argument is a shameless begging of that which you propose to prove.

2. Because his obedience was intended to be a *perfect example* and *pattern* to Christians in all succeeding ages. You have certainly quite forgot, Sir, that you proposed to prove, that the Saviour had a call to covenanting; you, a second

time, plainly take that for granted, which you propose to prove. Do you imagine, that it is a part of a perfect example, to perform occasional duties without a call, or contrary to the visible course of providence? No, certainly. You must first prove the call, and then it follows, that it was a branch of a perfect example; but not otherwise. A *perfect example*, consists in the *perfect* performance of what the law requires; but the law does not require the performance of occasional duties, without a call in providence. To perform without a call, is not to observe, but to disregard the law; is not a perfect, but an imperfect example. Till you prove, that the Saviour had a call, your argument is of no force; but you chuse rather to take it for granted. I am almost ashamed to detain the reader, in answering such silly sophistry; but it would pass for current coin, if it were not detected.

3. He had the loudest call, on account of the corruption of the law, and the transgression of the wicked.—My friend has forgot, that this is as valid a proof, that the Saviour had a call to covenanting, considered as a *positive*, as that he had a call to it considered as a *moral* duty. The corruption of the law, and the transgression of the wicked, seem evidently to have been one reason, among others, of covenanting in the times of Aza and Nehemiah; and Mr. Hutchison maintains it was positive. I would therefore ask my friend, if the corruption of the law, and transgression of the wicked, were a sufficient call to covenanting as a moral duty, how comes it to pass, that they were not, in like manner, a clear call to it as a positive duty? His answer is at hand; as a positive duty, it included the ceremonial system, and to swear to this, would have been acting contrary to the visible course of providence. I reply: Considered as a moral duty, it included the same ceremonial system, and would equally have been an acting contrary to the visible course of providence, which the corruption of the law, and transgression of the wicked, could never warrant. Besides, if the law perverted, and impiety raging, will constitute a loud and clear call to covenanting, singly by themselves, without any other particulars, I apprehend it must be well nigh an ordinary stated duty, which our author will not now maintain. Error



and immorality prevailing, may constitute a call to covenanting, along with other reasons; but cannot do so singly by themselves.—His first and second arguments, are an evident begging of the question; his third assigns no sufficient reason for a call to covenanting; his proof has entirely failed him.

Having obviated these objections, such as they are; I shall now proceed to show, that my opponent, even on his decisive argument, plainly gives up the cause. It is the substance of his argument, that nothing can be a moral duty, if we have no account of the Saviour performing it: but we have no account of his covenanting; therefore it cannot be a moral duty. p. 78. he acknowledges, that the Saviour neither did, nor could perform the duty of *repentance*: If repentance then is a moral duty, he owns that the Saviour neither did nor could perform it. There cannot be a more express giving up of his argument; repentance a moral duty, the Saviour neither did or could perform it.

In the same page, in order to prove, that the Redeemer had a call to covenanting, if it was a moral duty; he informs us, that he both recommended and practised *fasting*; and that no man can prove, that these things which are proper grounds of *fasting*, are not proper grounds of *covenanting*. I have already observed, that Samuel the prophet, and Jehoshaphat a most pious prince, were both of a different opinion from our author: Both of them were convinced of grounds of fasting, and practised it; but neither of them seem to have been convinced of a call to covenanting. But granting his argument for a little, I reply; It will not be maintained, that these things which are grounds of *personal* fasting, are also grounds of *public*, or *national* covenanting. It is only these things, which are grounds of public or national fasting, which can be grounds of public covenanting. Personal trials may be grounds of personal fasting; but can never be grounds of public covenanting. Now, can my opponent prove, that ever our Lord observed public or national fasting? Nay, he cannot. If it is said, he could not observe public national fasting, as an individual: I reply; He did not even fast with his disciples; but declares, they had no call thereto. The disciples of John ask him, *Why do we,*

and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples fast not? He answered, *Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?* Besides, whatever directions he gave concerning personal fasting, we never find him as a public teacher, urging the Jews to observe public fasting, while the bridegroom was with them, or reproving their rulers, civil or ecclesiastic, for the neglect of it. This is another moral duty, public national fasting, which the Saviour did not perform, having no call thereto; and an evidence also that he had no call to covenanting, as our author maintains, that the same things constitute a call to both.—I can never expect to meet with a more generous opponent, as he seldom proposes an objection, without furnishing me with a sufficient reply. I am indebted to him for this hint among others, as it did not occur, till he suggested it.

I observed, that there are several moral duties, included in the fifth commandment, which the Saviour did not perform. This he cannot refuse; but exclaims, that it carries much impiety in it. I know no impiety in asserting, that the moral duty of a husband providing for his spouse, or a parent providing for, and correcting his children, was never performed by the Saviour. Whenever my opponent is unable to answer, and can find no plausible evasion, he is sure to bawl out, *impiety, blasphemy*, or worse, if he can find words to express it. He owns, however, that there are duties binding on us, which it was impossible for our Redeemer to perform, on account of his abstractedness from the world; as impossible as to repent of sin, because he had none. But the question, Sir, is not *Was he abstracted from the world*, which is readily granted; but *are these moral duties?* and did the Saviour perform them? It is not, *Had the Saviour sin of his own?* It is readily granted, that he had only his people's sin imputed; but is *repentance* a moral duty, and did the Saviour perform it?—On each of these, you are obliged to overturn your decisive argument.

I shall mention another moral duty, included in the fifth commandment, which I expect my friend will not brand me with impiety for mentioning, and asserting, that the Saviour

did not perform it, for he expressly declined it; I mean, the duty of a *civil magistrate*. When one desired him, Luke xii. 14. to speak to his brother to divide the inheritance; he replied, 'Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you?' This is another moral duty which the Redeemer expressly refused, even when urged to it. The reader will observe, That according to Mr. Hutchison's own concession, there are moral duties which the Saviour *did* not, *could* not perform; which it is *impious* to mention, and was *impossible* for him to perform: and I have mentioned others which he did not perform, nor urge the Jews thereto, and which he expressly declined.—I ask the reader, if he could more expressly give up his decisive argument? Nothing a moral duty, if we have no account of the Saviour performing it; but allows that there are moral duties which he *did* not, *could* not, *impious* to mention, *impossible* for him to perform. His decisive argument turns out a jumble of contradiction, that a thing *may be*, and *not be*; *is*, and *is not*, at the very same time.—You endeavour, Sir, to blind your reader by assigning reasons why the Saviour did not perform this or that moral duty; such as, *his abstractedness from the world*, &c. and I have no occasion to object to them: but why, in the world, assign reasons, as you do, for the Saviour's non-performance of any moral duty, if nothing can be a moral duty which he did not perform? Your business, was to enable the reader to reconcile this with your decisive argument; for I am certain, you are the only man in the world who can reconcile them. If it is sufficient to assign a reason, as you do, why the Saviour did not perform some moral duties; it is very easy to assign a reason why he did not covenant, for he had no call thereto in providence. Your attempt to assign reasons why some moral duties were not performed by the Saviour, is an *evident* giving up of your cause.

He observes, that I own covenanting to be a first-table duty; and what was to hinder the Saviour to covenant? And we never find him defective in any other first-table duty.—To all this, I answer; That I still maintain, that covenanting is a first-table duty, but includes every relative duty of the second; and my opponent may prove, if he can, that the non-perform-



ance of an occasional duty of the first table, when there was no call in providence, could ever constitute a *defect*, or render the Redeemer's righteousness imperfect, more than the non-performance of relative duties of the second, several of which he owns the Saviour did not perform. What, says he, was to hinder the Saviour to covenant? I answer, He had *no call*; and Mr. Hutchison himself being judge, it would have been acting contrary to the visible course of providence. I readily agree with him, that we never find the Saviour *defective*, neither in any first nor second-table duty. But however much he is master of the English language, he must understand, that the non-performance of an occasional duty, when there is no call in providence, is no *defect*. The neglect of alms-giving, is no defect in the beggar's character. He has likewise forgot, that repentance is a first-table duty, and he owns that the Saviour did not perform it; and public national fasting is a first-table duty, which he did not observe.—He adds, that I have the *daring presumption* to say, that it would have been supererogation, had the Saviour covenanted: He neglects, however, to inform his reader, that I said so, on supposition the Saviour had no call in providence to covenanting. I still say, that to perform an occasional duty, when there is no call in providence, is to do *more* than the law requires, *in such circumstances*; which still appears to me exceeding like supererogation; and I do not yet understand the *daring presumption* of asserting it.—If my friend, or any other, have invented a better expression, I have no objection, if the sense is retained.

I add, that to perform occasional duties, without a call, is not to observe, but to disregard the law of God; for the law does not require the performance of occasional duties, without a call in providence. Is there any presumption in maintaining that the Saviour could not disregard the law? Nay, I maintain, that to perform occasional duties, without a call in providence, is to do what the law forbids. We find the Jews employed in mourning, Neh. viii. 9. At this time they were called to rejoicing; and therefore the Tirshatha, the Scribe, and the Levites discharge them from weeping, as being contrary to the law. I am aware, that it may be objected, that this

was not an occasional call to rejoicing, but a stated feast. I answer; It was a feast in commemoration of the kindness of providence.—I add further, the law of God requires us to observe the language of providence; and Jehovah threatens not to build, but to destroy these who do not; but to perform occasional duties, without a call in providence, is not to observe, but to disregard the language of it. Is there any *presumption* in maintaining, that the Redeemer could not act contrary to the law of God, by disregarding the providence of God? My friend is excellent at exclaiming, *daring presumption!* but to support his charge was troublesome.

On this particular, he asserts, It is the conclusion of the matter, that either our Lord's example is defective, or covenanting is not a duty of the moral law.—Are you so blind, Sir, as not to see, that according to your decisive argument, it is equally plain, that repentance, and the relative duties, contained in the fifth commandment, are not moral duties, otherwise the Saviour's example is defective; for you own, that he never performed them. On this particular he expresses deep regret, that any should *maim* the perfection of our Redeemer's righteousness. I answer; If the non-performance of some moral duties maims the Redeemer's righteousness, Mr. Hutchison is the man who has done it: for he maintains, that the Saviour did not perform the moral duty of repentance, and several moral duties included in the fifth command. Do you imagine, that any man in the world can be so blind as not to observe such *glaring* contradictions? It is an undoubted evidence, however, that he presumes his credulous admirers, will take every thing for gospel which he asserts, let it be as contradictory as it will. He likewise quotes the Confession of Faith, and the judicious Boston, asserting the perfection of our Lord's righteousness: But who denies the perfection of it? Had he done any thing to his purpose, it was not only to adduce the Confession and Boston, maintaining that the Redeemer's righteousness is perfect; but maintaining, that the performance of occasional duties, without a call in providence, was necessary to render his righteousness perfect. Without this, he might as well have quoted the Turkish Alcoran.

Let the reader select the substance of this argument, from the world of extraneous lumber, amidst which he has buried it, and it is this, neither covenanting, nor any other duty, can be moral, if the Saviour did not perform it: at the same time he acknowledges, that there are moral duties, both of first and second tables, which he did not, could not, impious to mention, impossible that he could perform them. I ask, if he does not expressly decide against himself, or that the Saviour's non-performance of a duty cannot be a proof that it is *not moral*, since he owns there are moral duties which he did not perform? The reader may expect an account of the perfection of our Redeemer's righteousness, in answer to his fourth charge of error.

*Arg. 3.* 'Were religious swearing a moral duty, says he, p. 79. it would have been observed by the venerable apostles of Christ.'—I know no reason to enlarge on this, after what I have adduced in answer to his former argument. Our acquaintance with the situation of the church in the apostle's days, is not so extensive, as to enable us to judge as clearly, what were the calls of providence, as our author pretends. As it is generally allowed, that covenanting is an occasional duty, if the apostles did not covenant, we may conclude, that they had no call in providence. I might pass this without further reply: But as he mentions several reasons why the apostles had the loudest call to covenanting, if it is a moral duty, I shall very shortly canvass them; they are a matter of very easy discussion.

1. It was incumbent on them, as ministers of the gospel, to *inculcate* and *exemplify* the duties of morality.—I reply; With respect to occasional duties, such as covenanting, if there was really a call in providence in the apostle's days, they were certainly bound to *exemplify*, and take every scriptural method for prevailing with the primitive Christians to practise it. It is equally true, however, if there was no call in providence, the apostles were neither bound to exemplify, nor to urge the primitive Christians to practise it without a call. My friend's reasoning is just, if there was a call; but this is the very thing he proposes to prove, and does not so much as attempt a proof,



but takes it for granted, that they had a call, otherwise they were not bound to exemplify.

He formerly allowed, that Jewish covenanting was an occasional duty, but this argument is a cogent proof, that covenanting must either be a *stated duty*, or *no duty* at all. He maintains there was a loud call to covenanting in the apostolic age, if it is a moral duty, because the apostles were bound to inculcate and exemplify moral duties; but gospel ministers, to the end of time, are as much bound, as the apostles were, to inculcate and exemplify the duties of morality, it must therefore be a stated duty while the world stands. Profound reasoning!

2. The apostles lived in a time of abounding wickedness.—This is another proof, that covenanting is a *stated duty*, at least till the latter-day glory; for till that time, wickedness will abound. Nor can our author prove, that there was any uncommon abounding of wickedness in the apostolic churches in general; and reasons of covenanting are to be stated from the situation of the church within, as well as the wickedness of these who are without.

3. It is the sum of his third reason, that the apostles lived in a time of persecution and hardships of various kinds.—When our author proves, that the *hardships* of ministers constitute a call to public covenanting, this argument will deserve attention. But, perhaps he means, that the apostolic churches were exposed to persecution. I still demand a proof, that *persecution*, singly by itself, without any other concurring circumstances, constitutes a call to covenanting. I maintain it does not.

I may add, that although persecution should usually be attended with a call to covenanting, in latter times; this is no proof that it was so in the apostolic churches. One principal reason, I apprehend, why persecution may frequently be attended with a call to covenanting, is the following: Christians may be much more liable to entertain suspicions, that many of their fellow-professors will faint, when, in cleaving to the truths of Christ, they must encounter danger of every sort, and perhaps look death itself in the face: Moreover, in such

a situation, a more than ordinary degree of confidence in one another may be requisite, to animate and encourage them to cleave to the truth in the midst of surrounding dangers. Of consequence, a lawful call to give one another all the assurance in their power, (even of a solemn oath), that they will stand by one another in cleaving to the truth, whatever may await.

Let me now, in a few words, compare the situation of the church in the apostle's times, and ours. In the former, the members of particular churches were not very numerous; they were privileged with extraordinary office-bearers, apostles, evangelists, &c.; extraordinary gifts, of tongues, healing, &c.; the power of vital godliness flourishing among them in an uncommon measure and degree. In our times, particular churches are extensive and numerous; shattered, divided, and tearing one another; extraordinary office-bearers are no more; extraordinary gifts withdrawn; and the power of vital godliness almost evanished. Will any man assert, that in such a situation, there is no more hazard of mutual suspicion, no more need of mutual confidence strengthened in a time of persecution, than in the apostolic churches? Persecution is the only reason which our author assigns for covenanting in the apostle's days; and unless he can prove, that their persecution occasioned mutual jealousies, weakened their mutual confidence, *which he cannot*, it is no reason for covenanting at all.

It is true, our author has a very easy reply to this, p. 109. To require an oath, instead of removing mutual jealousies, or increasing mutual confidence; has a direct tendency to *create jealousies, and destroy mutual confidence.*—The proof of this; is our author's uncommon acquaintance with *human nature, history, and experience*; but all is mere assertion. There is an old-fashioned history, however, which he does not seem to have consulted. It is the plain import of his reasoning, that when Abraham required an oath of his servant, to take a wife for Isaac of his own kindred, it had a direct tendency to create jealousy, and destroy confidence. The same must have been the case, when Jacob made his son Joseph to swear, that he would bury him in the sepulchre of his fathers;

n like manner, when Rahab made the spies to swear to preserve her, and her father's house. When Jonathan caused David to swear once and again, that he would not only deal kindly with him, but with his offspring also, it was calculated to create jealousy, and destroy mutual confidence. Nay, for ought I can understand, according to our author's argument, when Jehovah has annexed his oath to his promise, it must have a tendency to create jealousy, and destroy confidence. If men, says he, may be insincere in a common profession, they may be insincere in an oath also, and the matter is not mended. At this rate, an oath can be of no service in the world.

It is true, one church demanding a solemn oath of another, *may* increase mutual jealousies, although it *should* not. But I ask my friend, if he knows no difference between this, and a church convinced in her judgment and conscience, from the word and providence of God, that she has a clear and scriptural call to covenanting, and therefore voluntarily, without any requisition by other churches, applying to the solemn duty, both for strengthening her own hands, and increasing mutual confidence with sister-churches? Would this increase jealousy, and destroy mutual confidence? One church demanding a solemn oath of another, in such a manner, as to indicate jealousy, or suspicion, has little connection with the question. If an oath is not calculated to remove jealousies, and increase confidence, the children of men, good and bad, heathens and Christians, have hitherto been labouring under a gross mistake, in having recourse thereto for that very purpose. It may be expected they will now be undeceived, and oaths of every kind discarded, as serving no valuable end. If a man may be insincere in his word, or a common profession, he may likewise be insincere in his oath; and, according to our author's doctrine, the matter is not mended by an *assertory* oath: it is quite unnecessary. If he may be insincere in his promise, he may be insincere in his oath also, the matter is not mended; a *promissory* oath is quite superfluous. The honest Quakers are indebted to him. Such is our author's profound reasoning! —It is vain to expect, that a man should either write ratio-



nally, or consistently, when he handles a subject he knows nothing of.

He mentions another proof of a call to covenanting, which I had almost forgot. The apostles recommended and practised other occasional duties, such as *fasting*, and *public charity*; and why not the same with respect to covenanting, if a duty of the same kind?—Here he plainly maintains, that there cannot be a call to ONE, but there must be a call to EVERY occasional moral duty, because they are of the *same kind*. An indigent person at our door, is a call to private charity; is this likewise a call to private fasting, because a duty of the same kind? You mention fasting, and public charity, Sir; you have, doubtless, sometimes a call to recommend public charity; do you uniformly recommend public fasting at the same time? You certainly should, as they are duties of the same kind. If your reasoning is just, the venerable apostles were certainly mistaken; they recommended public charity, but no account of public fasting at the *same time*. They likewise recommended public fasting, but no account of public charity at the *same time*, which they ought certainly to have done, if according to your argument, the same thing must constitute a call to both. You certainly entertain notions very different from the holy apostles. It is abundantly evident, that calls to fasting and charity are different, and so also to fasting and covenanting. I observed already, that both Samuel the prophet, and Jehoshaphat a pious prince, were convinced of a call to fasting, but no account of covenanting. Can Mr. Hutchison prove, that this might not be the case with the apostles? If he cannot, their recommending fasting and charity, is no proof of a call to covenanting. You speak of all the circumstances above-mentioned, but what are they? downright fictions. Whatever is a call to ONE, is a call to EVERY occasional duty. You might with equal propriety assert, that whatever is a call to ONE, is a call to EVERY *stated* duty.

He here states an objection to his own doctrine, that the apostles did not covenant, because Christianity was not, in their day, a national religion.—I am very little concerned with this argument; but whatever is in it, his answer does not in the

least affect it. ' For the same reason, says he, they should not have fasted, or performed any other religious duty.' Because a handful of persons cannot act in a national capacity, and perform national duties, therefore they should perform no religious duty whatever. Because Mr. Hutchison, by himself, cannot act in the capacity, give out the deliverances, and transact every branch of the business of the synod of Relief; for this reason, should he perform no religious duty whatever? How absurd!—He adds, ' The duties of God's law are binding on individuals,—as well as nations.'—I reply, a variety of national duties are not binding on individuals, when the body of the nation will not concur, neither in person, nor by their representatives. It is a national duty to defend ourselves from an invading foe; is an individual bound to go forth and encounter them, although the nation, as such, give him no assistance? Can any thing be more ridiculous! ' Two tribes, says he, covenanted in Aſa's reign, when ten tribes had revolted.'—The two tribes, and the ten tribes, were now different states, each of them had their king, and frequently at war with one another; and each of them might perform national duties. It is certainly arrant folly, to raise objections which we cannot obviate. But how hard a matter, even for a man of uncommon abilities, to speak or write common sense, on a subject of which he is totally ignorant? He likewise repeats his charge of inconsistency; but as I have answered this fully already, I have no occasion to resume.—It is the sum of his argument, that the apostles had a call to covenanting, if a moral duty; *because they were exposed to persecution*, but this, by itself, is no proof in the world, of a call to covenanting: my friend, however, has nothing better to offer.

*Arg. 4.* ' The swearing of religious oaths under the gospel, says he, p. 81. is not a moral duty, because in that clear, full explication of the moral law, given in the New Testament, there is no precept injoining it.'—I observed, that although the New Testament is more clear in the general, especially with respect to doctrines, there are a variety of duties as clearly revealed in the Old Testament as words can ex-

prefs them, and covenanting among others; and therefore the less occasion to be explicit in the New. I may add, that several of them are *more* clearly revealed in the Old, and some of them are not mentioned at all in any *precept* of the New. I have already answered his cob-web defence, on a former particular; and as he attempts a reply to each of the instances I mentioned, I shall shortly examine it, and leave the reader to judge, if it is not a cob-web defence with a witness.

I mentioned *infant* baptism, which is not expressly mentioned in the New Testament. He replies; 'Did not Christ give his apostles,—a commission to teach and baptize all nations?' Very true, Sir; he enjoined baptism in the general: but the question respects *infant* baptism in particular; is it expressly mentioned? Some of your independent communicants will probably inform you, that they were first to teach, or *disciple* them, and then to baptize them. Be this as it will, it is not expressly mentioned; and therefore your reply is nothing to the purpose. I refer the reader to what I have already observed on a former particular, as it is beside my purpose to enumerate the various arguments in support of the divine warrant for infant baptism; and I still apprehend, that the arguments drawn from infant circumcision are unanswerable.

I mentioned *secret* and *social* prayer EVERY MORNING and EVENING. With respect to family worship, he replies, That 'Christ praying with his disciples, as a father with his family, is an excellent precedent for family worship.'—Perhaps some may apprehend, that it is as like a precedent for teachers to pray with their students. I ask, Where have we any account of this EVERY MORNING and EVENING? It is this, which it was your business to prove. Besides, where is your clear precept injoining it? for this is none.—'We read also of Cornelius, says he, that he feared the Lord with all his house.' And is this a clear precept injoining *family* worship EVERY MORNING and EVENING? I may as well assert, that it is a precept injoining covenanting; for it is no precept at all.—He adds, 'We read of several pious persons who had a church in their house, which Mr. Henry and others explain of their own families, joining together in the duties of religion. But is this a precept for family worship? I may as well affirm



that it is a precept for a church-covenant ; it is no precept at all : and Mr. Henry's opinion only conjecture ; others are of opinion, that Aquila, of whom this is asserted, was a public teacher, and public worship intended.—He adds, Christians are commanded to pray with *all prayer*, &c. But one who denies family prayer, would probably inform him, that this precept can only include that kind of prayer which God has enjoined ; and that he must prove, that God has required *family* prayer, before this command can be any proof of it : and perhaps he may need the assistance of the Old Testament concerning the *dwellings of the righteous*, and *families which call not on God's name*.

With respect to *secret* prayer, he replies, ' Had he read the sixth chapter of the gospel of Matthew, with the attention of a *school-boy*, he would have seen Christ recommending secret prayer to his disciples.'—Here I cannot refrain from mentioning my friend's *candour* and *strict attachment* to truth. He plainly asserts, that I did not attend to the sixth of Matthew ; whereas, I observe, ' Secret prayer is expressly mentioned in the New Testament,' with a view to the very scripture he quotes. Besides, what I had in my eye, was secret prayer EVERY MORNING and EVENING ; and that no reader whatever, much less a clergyman, might mistake undesignedly, the words *every morning* and *evening*, are in capitals. Now, Sir, if a *school-boy* cannot distinguish between secret prayer in the *general*, and *every morning* and *evening*, he deserves to be whipt for a dunce.

My friend is so candid, however, that in reciting my words, and with quotation marks, he not only omits the different characters, but the word EVERY, on which the sense evidently turns, is dropt altogether. I have no objection to dropping a branch of a sentence for brevity, in a quotation, when the sense is entire : But to drop the very words on which the sense hinges ; a *school-boy* must laugh at the silly *chicanery* ; and a man who has any sort of regard to common candor, must detest it. Where, Sir, do you find secret prayer mentioned *every morning* and *evening* ? This is the question ; and you never once look nigh it.

I observed, that we have no precept in the new testament enjoining *family fasting*.—He answers, ‘ Paul recommended it to husband and wife to give themselves to fasting, which seems, says he, to have been in a family capacity.’ His clear new-testament precepts are dwindled into a *seems to be*. The Macedonians gave their ownelves to the Lord, and it *seems* to have been a public vow.—I observed, that husband and wife are exhorted to give themselves to fasting, which he likewise conceals; and to me it seems to have been in a personal capacity, and I have the concurrence of the judicious Boston and others. ‘ Fasting was exemplified by Christ himself, says he, and by his apostles.’ It is true, we read that our Lord fasted forty days and forty nights; but I demand a proof that it was a part of his active obedience, and a pattern to us; and it was neither in a family capacity, nor is it a new-testament precept; and therefore no proof of your assertion.—I likewise demand your proof, Sir, that the apostles fasted during our Redeemer’s tabernacling in our world; that the children of the Bride-chamber fasted while the Bridegroom was with them; or, that they fasted in a family capacity after? Where is it mentioned in the new testament? and though it were, is it a precept enjoining it? This proof is lame on every side.

He likewise observes, That fasting was publicly observed, as we read, Acts xiv. 23. ‘ And when they had ordained them elders in every church, with prayer and fasting.’ He proposes, in opposition to what I had asserted, to adduce new-testament precept enjoining *family fasting*. Well, they fasted *publicly* at the ordination of ministers in the churches; and the conclusion must needs be, that this is a new-testament precept enjoining *family fasting*. Did the reader ever hear any thing more ridiculous!—He mentions Anna the prophetess fasting night and day. But can you prove, Sir, that she had a family? Or do you really thin that her family fasted night and day? I apprehend it will readily be allowed, that it was personal fasting; as it is not said her *family* fasted, but *herself*. Besides, the manner of expression seems to imply such constancy and perseverance, that may be questioned, if it is the duty of a whole family to be constantly employed in fasting. If he only find the word *fasting* in a text, it is a clear precept enjoining *family fastin*

Conclusive reasoning!—I mentioned Zech. xiii. 12. as much clearer with respect to family fasting. He replies, ‘ This is a prophecy, not a precept.’—I am obliged to you, Sir, for the hint; for you have scarcely mentioned a precept in all your answer. This is an old-testament prophecy, however, respecting new-testament times; and points out family fasting more clearly than any new-testament writer has done, which is all that I asserted. Whereas, you maintain new-testament *precepts* enjoining, but *examples* and strained consequences the substance of all you adduce.

It would have been much better, to have passed by this particular, as unworthy of your labour, or the attention of mankind: your labour discovers in the clearest manner, that you can make no tolerable reply.—These are the particulars I adduced, not one of them is expressly enjoined in the new testament; if covenanting must be dismissed for this reason, it will travel in decent company.

He now proceeds to defend a less important argument against covenanting, consisting of two branches.

1. ‘ Duties truly moral, force a sense and impression of their obligation upon bad men.’—This argument is quite defective, unless he mean, that EVERY moral duty forces a sense of its obligation upon the consciences of wicked men. If this is the case, the knowledge of wicked men must be as extensive as the law of God; for duties cannot impress their conscience unless they know them; and of consequence, wicked men have suffered much less in their intellects by the fall than good men, if they have suffered any thing at all.—It is the sum of this branch of his argument, *some moral duties* strike the consciences of wicked men, and therefore nothing can be a moral duty which does not: a palpable sophism!—Besides, is he certain, that covenanting has never impressed the conscience of a wicked man?

2. ‘ But religious swearing does not, in many cases, carry home a sense of its obligation on good men.’—If this argument were of any importance, it is sufficient to reply, That covenanting has, in many cases, carried home a sense of its obligation on good men; and his argument seems to grant, that in some cases it may: But it is of no weight on either side.



It evidently makes the *feelings* and *impressions* of good men, which may frequently clash with one another, an argument against the *morality* of covenanting, and of consequence a *test* of the *morality* of duties. I observed this formerly: and my friend stiles the charge ungenerous; but repeats his assertion in language still as expressive. The reader may hear his own words. ‘ If the new nature is the law of God engraven upon the hearts of all good men, it is surprizing, that the law of covenanting by swearing, should not be found written there also, so as to be felt, as well as other moral duties.’—What can be more express, written *so as to be felt*, and because *it is not felt* by some good men, with respect to covenanting, it cannot be a moral duty; but still, it is ungenerous to alledge, that *its being felt*, is made a test of morality. The plain language of it is this, we are quite divided in our judgment, let the *feelings* of *some* good men decide the matter.

If all good men *feel*, and are *impressed* with every *important moral duty*, how comes it to pass, that many good men differ about the *morality* of the Sabbath; *church-government*, a capital mean of divine institution; and *church-fellowship*? If Mr. Hutchison’s argument proves any thing, it will go a great length to prove, that the observation of the Sabbath, church government, and church fellowship, are not moral.—Add to this, that some good men have affirmed, that the moral law does not make it the duty of sinners to believe in Christ, such as Brown and Gill. Will Mr. Hutchison maintain, that the morality of these important duties is either overturned, or questionable, because good men have not found their consciences impressed with it.

I shall again remind him of the apostle’s declaration, that while here, we know but in part; and therefore if the *feelings* of good men are as extensive as the law of God, they must exceed their knowledge, and accordingly are impressions which are not founded upon the word of God, nor influenced by the knowledge of it. I have no objection to allow him the unmo-  
lest possession of them.—This argument is exceedingly well adapted to these, who are more concerned about what *good men* have said concerning this or that, than what the *word of God* declares concerning it; and who mean to travel to heaven

with the sayings of good men for their staff, leaving the sayings of God's word to others.

He allows, that the godly may be ignorant of some moral duties; 'but these are, for the most part, the more *deep* and *inward* duties of the divine law.' He best knows what he means by *deep duties*; and although covenanting have an external part, it reaches the soul or inward man, as much as any other moral duty.—He adds, 'The more *visible* duties of the moral law, which men are to perform, in a public and social capacity, are expressed in the word of God so clearly, that he that runs may read them.'—This, Sir, is certainly a *visible* ramble. I ask your proof, that the word of God is more exprefs concerning visible public duties, than it is concerning private and personal duties; or that Christians are more agreed either in their judgment, or in their feelings and impressions concerning the one than the other. It is true, however, that covenanting is expressed as clearly in the word of God, as you assert, unless the old testament is struck off from being any part of the word of God. He desires me to consider if I have not made the *feelings* of men the rule of duty, when I make the *ability* of Heathens, &c. I am indebted to him for furnishing me with an answer. He allows that I speak of the *ability*, not of *feelings* of Heathens; and I never yet considered *unscriptural feelings*, and *blind impressions*, as any part of the ability either of Heathens or Christians. It is false, however, that I make either the ability or feelings of Heathens, the rule of their duty. But I pass this, as I will meet with it afterward.

He concludes his train of reasoning against covenanting, with another argument, evidently of the less important kind. 'The very contentions which have prevailed among Christians, concerning the moral duty of swearing religious covenants, is an argument of considerable weight against the morality of such oaths.' I replied, that I might as well urge it as an argument of considerable weight in *favour* of covenanting; because men of subtle heads, and un sanctified hearts, have left little or nothing uncontroverted, which appeared to me sufficient, to take off the considerable force of his argument. And as his illustration turned principally, if not entirely, on second-table duties, I observed, that he should remember, covenanting is a

first-table duty. He replies; ‘ But why did he not remember ‘ this himself, when he argues, p. 64. from second-table duties ‘ against Christ’s covenanting, which is a first-table duty?’— The answer is plain and easy: If I did not remember it, Mr. Hutchison is to blame for stating his argument in such a manner as does not confine me to first, more than to second-table duties. Had he stated his argument, that nothing could be a moral duty, of the *first table*, which was not exemplified in the life of our blessed Redeemer, it was then requisite that I should have confined myself to first-table duties, not performed by the Saviour. But as he makes no such limitation, affirming peremptorily, that he questions the morality of any duty (without any restriction to the first more than second-table) which was not exemplified by our divine Redeemer; there was no reason in the world, why I should confine myself to duties of the first table. Every one must see, that a second-table duty, not exemplified by our Redeemer, as effectually overthrows his argument, as a duty of the first table. If he could not state his argument to suit his purpose, it was not my business to rectify it. Besides, I have mentioned duties of both tables, which our Redeemer had no call to exemplify; and Mr. Hutchison cannot deny it. It is but wasting time, to answer such silly quibbles. It was every way to my purpose to remind him, that covenanting is a first-table duty, as his reasoning hinged on second-table duties; and the argument from the one to the other is not, in every case at least, conclusive.

He adds, ‘ It is certain, that Protestants in general, are much ‘ more agreed about the duties of morality, than about many ‘ of the doctrinal points of religion. None, I suppose, will ‘ deny this, but persons so filled with prejudice that it is need- ‘ less to reason with them.’ He should have restricted his assertion to *some* moral duties; for none, I suppose, will maintain, that Protestants may differ about the doctrines of religion, without differing about some moral duties also; but such as maintain that the doctrines of religion are *mere speculations*. Every doctrine of Christianity has its corresponding moral duty; and if Protestants differ about the one, they must of necessity differ about the other also.



It is his argument, that contentions prevailing among Christians about duties, is an argument of considerable weight against the morality of them; and a branch of his illustration, that they are more agreed about the duties of morality, than about the doctrines of religion. Would the reader see the plain import of all this? Very furious contentions have prevailed in the churches concerning the *supreme Deity* of the great God our Saviour; but according to his illustration they may, for all this, agree about the corresponding moral duty of honouring the Son, even as they honour the Father. The very reverse is true; their contentions must, in the nature of things, equally respect the doctrine, and the corresponding duty. But according to his reasoning, their contentions are an argument of considerable weight against the morality of honouring the Son, *EVEN AS* we honour the Father.—Protestants have contended keenly about the doctrine of *original depravity*; and can they possibly agree concerning the corresponding moral duty of bewailing, mourning over our natural impurity? Can the man who denies the doctrine of original sin, bewail original defilement? But according to his reasoning, their contentions are an argument of considerable weight against the morality of confessing and bewailing original depravity.—Contentions have prevailed about the Redeemer's all perfect righteousness being our *only* and *complete* justifying robe, and of consequence, about the corresponding moral duty of disclaiming all our own righteousnesses as filthy rags, in point of justification.—According to his reasoning, these contentions are an argument of considerable weight against the morality of disclaiming our own doings.

I have mentioned these particulars, not only to refute his argument, but to show the absurdity of separating doctrines and duties. Contentions among Protestants about doctrines and duties, can be *no argument* against the *truth* of the one, or the *morality* of the other; for, if so, numerous are the doctrines and duties also which must be discarded. If covenanting must be dismissed on this account, according to my friend's argument, it must have a numerous train of attendants. It is true, as he alledges, that Heathens may be agreed about *some* moral duties, and Christians about a greater number; but

while there are a variety of doctrines and duties also, which have been, and still are matter of keenest contention in the Christian churches, his argument is of no avail. I shall therefore dismiss it, as I apprehend it will not be easy, even for *good men* to feel the force of it.

Such is his train of reasoning against covenanting; and I shall now present to the reader, a short view of his arguments, which have any *appearance* of reasoning, and which he seems to consider as most decisive.

1. Covenanting among the Israelites was not moral, but positive; because corporal pains entered into the matter of their covenant.

2. It was positive and not moral; because it was enjoined to that people alone, and they were punished for breaking the oath binding on them by the authority of God, and not other nations.

3. The swearing of religious oaths cannot be a moral duty; because it was never observed by the holy Jesus himself.

4. Were religious swearing a moral duty, it would have been observed by the venerable apostles of Christ.

5. The swearing of religious oaths, under the gospel, is not a moral duty, because in that clear and full explication of the moral law, given in the New Testament, there is no precept injoining it.

These are all his arguments which have any *shadow* of reasoning, and on which he seems to lay the greatest weight. I shall, in like manner, present to the reader, a short view of my reply.

1. Whether covenanting among the Jews, was *moral* or *positive*, it behoved to include an engagement in the strength of grace, to obey whatever God enjoined.—Mr. Hutchison expressly allows it. But it is the sum of the first of these arguments, that the covenant of Israel could not be moral, because they engaged to obey what God had expressly enjoined; for Jehovah peremptorily commanded them to inflict corporal pains on idolaters in Canaan. Although it was moral, it behoved to include corporal pains; but it could not be moral, says he, because it included them. A more evident contradiction, was impracticable.

2. The covenant of Israel was enjoined to that people *alone*, because it included positive duties, which God did not require of other nations; but this no proof that it was not moral, when the ten commandments were the very sum of their covenant engagements.—According to this argument, to read the word of God, to believe on a promised Saviour, to worship a three-one God, reconciled in Christ, cannot be moral duties, for these were as much enjoined on that people alone, under that dispensation, as their covenanting was. Nor can reading, hearing, believing on Christ, be moral duties, if nothing is moral, for the non-performance of which, the Heathen are not punished.—According to the second of these arguments, reading, hearing, believing on a Saviour, renouncing our own righteousness, are not moral duties, for the Heathen will not be punished for the non-performance of them.

3. It is the substance of the next argument, that nothing can be a moral duty, if we have no account of the *Saviour* performing it.—After he has made a prodigious bluster about this argument, he totally overthrows it. He owns that there are moral duties, both of the first and second table, which he *did not, could not, impious* to mention, *impossible* for the Saviour to perform them. He could not more expressly give up his argument; nothing a moral duty which the Saviour did not exemplify, but moral duties which he owns he did not, could not exemplify. I have mentioned others, such as public fasting, and the duties of the civil magistrate, which he expressly declined when urged thereto. He likewise assigns reasons why some moral duties were not performed by our Redeemer, such as, his abstractedness from the world. But the question is not, was the Saviour abstracted from the world, but are these moral duties? and did the Redeemer ever perform them? But why, in the world, assign reasons for the Saviour's non-performance of some moral duties, if according to his argument, nothing can be a moral duty, if the Saviour did not exemplify it? The very attempt to assign reasons why any moral duty was not performed by our blessed Lord, is an express giving up his argument.

4 The next of these arguments, *viz.* that it was not observed by the venerable *apostles*, is of no force without a proof



that they had a call thereto in providence. He is conscious of this, and attempts a proof.

(1.) It was incumbent on them, says he, to *inculcate* and *exemplify* the duties of morality.—But with respect to *occasional duties*, he plainly takes that for granted, which he proposes to prove; for if the apostles had not a call in providence, it was not incumbent on them to exemplify, or inculcate on others. He must first prove that they had a call, and then it was incumbent to exemplify, but not otherwise. He first takes it for *granted* that they had a call, and then he *proves* that they had one.

(2.) The apostles, says he, lived in a time when *wickedness* abounded.—If this prove any thing, it will prove a call to covenanting, as a stated duty, till the latter-day glory. Till that time wickedness will abound.

(3.) The apostles were exposed to much *persecution*.—Persecution will never, singly by itself, constitute a call to covenanting, without other concurring circumstances. The church may be labouring under persecution, and a variety of circumstances render covenanting unseasonable. This argument is of no force, without a proof that the apostles had a call to covenanting, in which he has entirely failed.

5. According to the fifth of these arguments, nothing can be a moral duty, if there is no *precept* injoining it in the New Testament.—In answer to this, I observed, that infant baptism, secret and family prayer, *every morning* and *evening*, family fasting also, and other duties which might be mentioned, none of them are injoined by any precept in the New Testament. When Mr. Hutchison attempts to prove that they are injoined, he adduces little or nothing, but examples and consequences, instead of precepts injoining. It is true, pertinent approved examples are allowed to be equivalent to a precept; but how impertinent are his examples? *Public fasting* at the ordination of ministers, an example for *family fasting*; can the reader discover the connection?

These are all his arguments against covenanting which deserve any attention, and I can, with all freedom, submit it to the reader's judgment, if he has supported a single one of them. I judged it necessary to give this summary of his reasoning, be-

cause he has so interspersed it with extraneous stories, and false charges, that before I could answer these, the reader is in hazard of losing a connected view of the argument. Nor is there a single sentiment in his illustration, however foreign to the purpose, which I have knowingly overlooked. As I am not conscious of difficulty in answering any thing he has advanced, the reader is furnished with a reply to every particular. Thus it appears that his arguments are quite inconclusive; and covenanting is likely to maintain some measure of credit, till more solid arguments against it are adduced, till it is attacked by a more formidable foe.

He seems now to be conscious, that his arguments are not as conclusive as he pretended. At the conclusion of a former publication, we had a hideous noise concerning the mischief this controverly would work in the Secession, the risque their character would run who would venture to oppose him. All this is now set aside; he seems now to have learned, that if there is a proper time for boasting, it is when the armour is put off. Like his fellow simpleton, he concludes his attack on covenanting, by informing the public, that he has delivered his sentiments on the negative side of the question, that others have taken the affirmative, and the reader must judge for himself. Providing that the word of God, and not *popular prejudices*, or *feelings* and *impressions*, inconnected with the knowledge of the word, is allowed to be the touchstone, I readily agree, that the reader should judge between us.

#### S E C T. VI.

*Mr. Hutchison's sentiments on covenanting, by a solemn Vow, considered; and his charge of bloody Principles repelled.*

I N a former publication, I had the pleasure to observe, that Mr. Hutchison is not a stated enemy to covenanting in general. In his Delineation, he gives a draught of a covenant, the matter, subscription, occasion, and design of it, all which he highly applauds; only the *formality* of an oath is rejected. I have now the pleasure to inform the reader, that he is advanced a step further; he now admits of covenanting by a

*public* solemn vow. We are now well nigh agreed; for, if public covenanting is allowed, it is a matter of less moment to me, whether it is by a solemn vow, or with the formality of an oath; especially as a vow is of the same nature with a promissory oath, and a promissory oath *materially*, although not *formally*, included in the bosom of a vow. As this is the case, since my opponent allows of the first, it is not improbable, that his scruples at last may vanish, as soon as decency will admit. The reason he assigns, for allowing of covenanting by a solemn vow, renders it exceedingly probable, that he may soon get over his scruples at the formality of an oath also.

He informs his reader, p. 102. that a vow is, 'A solemn promise made to God, to do something that is lawful to be done.' And p. 101. that 'all gospel worship is a vow essentially and materially.' And 'that several parts of gospel worship contain a *formal* vow.' He does not therefore entirely reject covenanting, because it is included in every branch of gospel worship. I have no objection to his reasoning, which is borrowed from the Rev. Mr. Graham, that a vow is *materially* included in every branch of gospel worship; *essentially* and *formally* are something different.

On the same principles, however, I maintain, that all gospel worship includes an oath *materially*, although not *formally*. An oath is a solemn appeal unto, and invocation of God, as a *witness* of our sincerity; and as the *judge* of all, who will undoubtedly take vengeance for dissimulation and falsehood; and therefore usually concludes, *as I shall answer to God at the great day*. Now, in prayer, and every other branch of gospel worship, (if it is rightly performed) the worshipper addresses himself to God as the omniscient witness of his sincerity; if he does not, he worships a blind idol, not the omniscient God. Every branch of gospel worship therefore *materially* includes a solemn appeal to God as our omniscient witness. The gospel worshipper, in like manner, addresses himself unto the Most High, as the *Judge* of all the earth, who will render to every man according to his works, and before whom he himself must shortly give an account. If he does not, he worships a god, who, as he thinks, will neither judge, punish, nor reward. Every branch of gospel worship therefore, *materially* includes



an appeal unto, and invocation of the Most High, as the omniscient witness, and as the judge of all.

As my friend does not condemn covenanting, because a vow is materially included in every act of gospel worship, it is likely he will soon get over his scruples at an oath also, since it is likewise included materially in every branch of gospel worship, and his reasoning equally conclusive for both.

I but now observed, that it is a matter of less moment to me, whether covenanting is by a vow or oath, since a vow, as our Westminster divines observe, is of the same nature with a promissory oath; and I may add, that a solemn vow *materially*, although not *formally*, includes a promissory oath. A promissory oath is an invocation of, and appeal unto God as the *Witness*, with respect to our sincerity in what we promise, and as the *Judge* who will take vengeance on the perfidious. All this is material included in a solemn vow. Accordingly we find them joined together by the Psalmist, Psal. cxxxii. 'How he sware and vowed.' The wise man evidently represents the Most High, both as the witness and revenger, with respect to a solemn vow, Eccl. v. 5, 6. 'Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin,—wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?' Plainly representing God as the witness and avenger of rashness, or dissimulation, in a solemn vow. Now, if he represents himself in this manner with respect to a solemn vow, we cannot perform the duty aright, without an appeal unto him, as he represents himself. If a vow is admitted, there can be no reasonable objection to an oath, since a promissory oath is *materially* included in every solemn vow.

There are some particulars, however, concerning vows, in which I cannot agree with my opponent. Baptism and the Lord's supper excepted, I cannot agree with him, that other branches of gospel worship are *formal* vows. P. 104. 'Prayer, says he, public, private, and secret, contains a formal vow.' Although prayer may and ought to have adoration, confession, and thanksgiving, connected with, or included in it, the *FORMALITY* of prayer, certainly consists in *petition*, or *supplication*. Mr. Hutchison maintains, that a vow is a pro-

mise to God, to do something; but prayer is an asking from God, to RECEIVE something from him. How *promising to God, to do*; and *asking from God, to receive*, should be formally the same, is to me quite unintelligible. Besides, if prayer is a *formal vow*, every thing applicable to a vow, must be applicable unto prayer also. We read, however, of *performing, keeping, breaking* vows; but it would be something uncouth to speak of *performing, keeping, breaking*, prayers; an evidence that they are not *formal vows*. If public prayer is a formal vow, I apprehend it has not only been very ignorantly performed, but that many cannot yet persuade themselves, that they are joining in a *public formal vow*, when they join in public supplication unto God. I must differ from my friend on this particular, and maintain, that a vow is only *materially*, not *formally* included in gospel worship in general. As a native consequence of this, I cannot agree with our author, that public formal vowing, is an ordinary *stated duty*; but maintain, that it is an occasional duty, and time to be set apart for the performance of it, when God in his providence calls thereto.

I am likewise at a loss to understand my friend's doctrine, concerning the obligation of vows and oaths, in things merely lawful, or indifferent. In his *Delineation*, p. 120. he maintains, 'That when oaths are interposed in matters which are left indifferent by the law of God, and neither sins nor duties in themselves, such oaths have an intrinsic obligation in them. —In all matters, therefore, which are not the object of divine command, if an oath is interposed, it is strictly obligatory; and the obligation, in such cases, arises wholly from the oath itself.' In p. 118. of the performance under consideration, he maintains, that vows, in things lawful or indifferent, have no obligation at all: 'But the law of God appointing vows in all such cases to be performed, is in the power of the person vowing. If the law of God did not require lawful vows to be kept, they could have no obligation at all; and it would be just as lawful to *break*, as to *make* them.' It is hard to understand how an oath, in a matter of indifference, has an *intrinsic* obligation, is *strictly* obligatory, and the obligation arising *wholly* from the oath itself, for all

these are his identical expressions; but a vow in a similar case, has no obligation at all. He mentions particularly, that if a man swear to go to such a place, on such a day, his oath has an intrinsic obligation, is strictly obligatory, and the obligation arises wholly from the oath itself: But although he should vow to go to such a place, on such a day, it has no obligation at all, according to my opponent's doctrine of vows; it is only the law requiring such vows to be kept.

I could wish to be informed, how an oath, respecting things indifferent, constitutes a strict obligation, arising wholly from the oath itself; but a vow, in a similar case, no obligation at all. Without this, your new obligation-men, Sir, will probably attempt to avail themselves of your doctrine, concerning the intrinsic obligation of oaths in things indifferent. Perhaps some of them may question your right to bind yourself by oath, where the law of God has left you at liberty. Others of them will probably alledge, that you add to the obligation of the law, not in the way of *strengthening* but *extending*, as you maintain a strict obligation, which does not arise from the law, for it leaves the man at his liberty to do or forbear: the obligation arises wholly from the oath. Besides, Sir, they will certainly maintain, and with a considerable degree of argument on their side, that if an oath has an intrinsic obligation in one thing, it must have an intrinsic obligation in every thing not sinful, whether it is commanded or indifferent. They will probably allow, that the obligation of the divine law is as much superior to the intrinsic obligation of an oath as you please; but deny that it either does, or can change or destroy the intrinsic obligation of the oath: and things which are subordinate are not inconsistent.

I am verily of opinion, that according to your principles, you ought certainly to have fixed the obligation of oaths in things indifferent, as well as of vows in the law of God requiring such oaths to be kept. You will grant, I suppose, that when once an oath is made in things indifferent, the law requires the swearer to perform that, to which he has bound himself by oath; and this subsequent requirement of the law, does not destroy the intrinsic obligation of the oath. But if that to which the person swears was antecedently commanded



or required by the law, in this case you maintain, that the antecedent requirement destroys, or annihilates the intrinsic obligation of the oath. It is difficult to understand, Sir, how an *after* requirement of the law has no influence on the intrinsic obligation of an oath, but a *prior* requirement prevents, or annihilates the obligation. Did I consider the difference between you and some others, concerning obligation, as *real*, and were engaged on your side; I would certainly charge you with betraying the *important cause*, by your *intrinsic obligation*, arising *wholly* from the oath itself.

I readily agree with Mr. Hutchison, that the Rev. Mr. Graham has wrote judiciously on several topics concerning covenanting; though I am far from being as certain of his superiority to ALL his own Brethren, who have wrote on that subject. I cannot, however, approve of his speaking contemptuously of the distinction between an assertory, and promissory oath, as *nugatory* and *trifling*. Our Confession evidently maintains the distinction, chap. xxii. sect. 5. 'A vow is of a like nature with a promissory oath;' plainly distinguishing between an assertory, and promissory oath. While we profess to approve of our Confession, not merely as a bond of union, but as a test of orthodoxy, if we differ from it, we might *at least* express ourselves with some degree of modesty. I still apprehend, that there is a manifest difference between an oath in which a man calls God to witness his veracity in declaring matters of fact, as in a criminal cause; and an oath in which he calls God to witness the sincerity of his resolutions, in the strength of promised grace, to believe what God has revealed, and obey what he has required, as in public covenanting. In the first, if he declares the truth, it is over; and so no propriety in speaking of *performing* or *keeping* it afterwards. But the scripture, once and again, speaks of *performing* and *keeping* promissory oaths; a manifest evidence, that an engagement to perform the duties connected with the oath, is materially, if not formally included. The distinction is not fictitious, but *real*; it is not nugatory, but *important*. Should a man pledge his fidelity to us, that he was declaring nothing but truth in matters of fact; and likewise pledge his fidelity, that he would perform some important branch of service for us; I apprehend the distinction

between these would not be considered as trifling. We would view the first, as only ascertaining us of the truth of a matter of fact; but the other as including an engagement to do us an essential service. An assertory oath is a calling God to witness our veracity; but a promissory oath includes an engagement to perform the duties annexed. Although I agree with my opponent, that Mr. Graham is a sensible writer, I cannot very much admire his extent of judgment, in the preface to his sermons; when he allows the delirium of the day, (I mean, unbridled rage at all who differ from us) to waft him into the unknown regions of Utopia, where he converses with, and predicts the Burgher's conduct in the year 9999.; exceedingly similar to Æneas conversing with his Sire in the shades, concerning his future progeny, for many hundreds of years.

I apprehend Mr. Hutchison will equally disapprove of Mr. Graham's assertion in the following page. 'Such professed lukewarmness in the cause of Christianity and the Reformation, even among these who are loud, and perhaps sincere in their profession of love to Christ, and all good men, Reason herself must pronounce an infallible sign, that a certain silly simplicity and giddiness, and a taste for absurdity hath already seized on the generation, which may be the forerunner of awful apostasy from the truth, and unprecedented revolutions in the island.' I need not inform my friend who they are, who are seized with a taste for absurdity. It is agreeable, however, that Mr. Hutchison allows of covenanting by a solemn vow, and our dispute well nigh over; as a vow is of the same nature with, and includes a promissory oath. Perhaps it is some of the principles he imbibed in his early years, still keeping hold of his conscience, which have constrained him to acknowledge covenanting by a solemn vow. And it is not improbable that a number of his connections, disapproving of his coarse assertions concerning covenanting, has not been without its influence. Be these things as they will, the acknowledging of the truth is agreeable.

I am suffered to pass with respect to toleration, terms of communion, and a variety of other particulars. My friend informs his reader, that what I have advanced on these topics is unworthy of his labour, or the attention of mankind.—

There are still some, however, who are so ignorant as to imagine, that what I have suggested, deserves their serious consideration; and that Mr. Hutchison only evades, because he can give no solid reply. I shall therefore satisfy myself at the time, with shortly repelling his charge of bloody principles, till I see some appearance of answer to these sentiments, which I have already advanced.

In p. 13. of his Animadversions, he proceeds to instruct his weighty charge, by informing the reader, that the general assembly petitioned the Scotch parliament to enforce the subscribing of the covenant under all civil pains; and that the parliament enacted accordingly.—I reply: Mr. Hutchison has no scruple to give his suffrage in favour of penal statutes against Papists; and some who lived nigher that period, and had rather better access to know, inform us, that these penal statutes were principally intended against Papists, and tools of despotic arbitrary power; and only *in terrorem*, without any design to put them in execution, unless the turbulent behaviour of these enemies to their liberties, civil and religious, should render it necessary for the preservation of their liberty and lives: And Mr. Hutchison is exceedingly sparing in furnishing us with instances of these penal statutes being executed. But although it were true, that the assembly and parliament really intended to carry these compulsory measures into execution; what connection has this with *Seceders* maintaining bloody principles?

Yes, says my opponent, the Scotch parliament in the year 1643, and 1644. enacted, that the solemn league should be subscribed by all ranks, under all civil pains; and *Seceders* in their Judicial Testimony, approve of these bloody persecuting acts. Speaking of the celebrated period, says he, between 1638, and 1650; they have these remarkable words: ‘During this period, the estates of the nation also gave their helping hand to the work of reformation, not only by the legal establishment given unto it in the year 1640, but also by approving the solemn league and covenant, in Anno 1644.’ My friend assures his reader, that these are the identical, bloody, persecuting popish acts, as he is pleased to stile them, which he had but now mentioned. Although the reformation between



38 and 50, was not without its defects; and although they were in a manner forced, for their own safety, to adopt severe measures, in some instances; it was such a period, Sir, that every REAL presbyterian must despise the NOMINAL one who derides it.—But what is it in these words which renders them so remarkable? Seceders approve of the civil establishment given to religion; and what then? Is this, Sir, to maintain bloody principles, or to approve of penal statutes? A very small scrape of common sense, might have suggested to you, that a civil establishment given to religion, is one thing, and penal statutes another, and a very different. Penal statutes annexed to an establishment, evidently *suppose* that establishment prior unto them. Seceders approve of the *establishment* given to religion; and therefore, say you, they must certainly approve of *penal statutes*. Conclusive reasoning!

Seceders likewise give their suffrage to the parliament's approving of the solemn league. Can you prove, Sir, that there is any heresy in this? Because Seceders consider the parliament as only doing their duty in approving of the solemn league, you are quite certain, that they must also approve of compulsory measures and civil pains. Common sense might have taught you, that injoining the covenant, under all civil pains, supposes a *previous approbation* of it; and though Seceders approve of the one, it will never follow from this, that they likewise approve of the other; nor can you produce a single syllable to that purpose. They declare their approbation of the establishment of religion, and the parliament's approving of the solemn league, but not one word of penal statutes, or civil pains. The reader will not be surprised that Mr. Hutcheson asserts these things with an air of confidence peculiar to himself, if the force of his argumentation is considered. Seceders, says he, approve of the parliament establishing religion, and approving of the solemn league; and *therefore* must certainly approve of penal statutes, coercive measures, civil pains, &c. To use his own dialect, is he not the *merest* trifler with the public? Besides, if the reader consult the passage, he will find the compilers of the Testimony declare, that they do not mean, that there was nothing defective, or culpable, in the administration during this reforming period. But Mr. Hut-

chifon is quite certain, that bloody persecuting popish acts, are none of these things which Seceders might consider as culpable. The reader must believe him.

He adds, that in their Testimony, they likewise complain that during the public resolutions, the nation, with the consent of the church, gave up with all the civil securities given to religion from 1638. Was there no security given to religion, Sir, during that period, except bloody persecuting acts, penal statutes, &c.? Conclusive reasoning! Besides, by consulting the passage, the reader may see, at first glance, that what the Testimony inveighs against in that period, so remarkably persecuting, is the entrusting persons with our liberties *civil* and *religious*, who were *notour enemies* to both; and who very soon, as might well be suspected, deprived the nation both of the one and the other. Now, whatever defect might be in the management of this particular, I cannot understand how Seceders are chargeable with maintaining bloody principles, because they *disapprove* of entrusting treacherous Papists, bloody cut-throats, tools of arbitrary power, with their liberties, civil and religious. This is the sum of our author's argument.

He adds, ' In p. 110. of their Testimony, without one single exception, they receive, acknowledge, and approve all the acts of Assembly, from Anno 1638, to 1650.' And consequently approve of the persecuting act, for enforcing the covenant with civil pains. By consulting the passage, the reader will find, that the Testimony expresses an approbation of these acts, only, in ' so far as they were adapted to *advance* ' and *carry on* a covenanted reformation, agreeable to the ' word of God.' These are the identical expressions; but it was Mr. Hutchison's business to conceal them. Nor is this approbation confined to the celebrated period, but extends to *all* the acts of Assembly since that time, adapted to the same purpose, *viz.* the promoting of reformation. Must Seceders, Sir, be chargeable with bloody principles, because they approve of the deeds of their ancestors, in so far as they were calculated to promote reformation, agreeable to the word of God? You are not hunting for heresy, and the reader will undoubtedly

admire your argumentation. The word of God, it would seem, must yield to a novel whim.

But what, says he, shows to a demonstration, what the principles of Seceders are, respecting toleration, is their answers to Mr. Nairn, p. 47. where they approve of, and bear honourable testimony to what they call, the deed of the civil constitution, set upon a reformed footing, by act 8th, parl. James VI. It is true, Sir, as you assert, that the act does contain, that the king, at his coronation, should engage to root out heretics. But the body of the act, which you suppress, contains also, 'That the king should engage to observe the true religion himself; preserve it for his subjects; and rule them agreeable to the word of God.' Now, it is this, and not the rooting out of heretics, which the answers to Mr. Nairn, call the *deed of civil constitution reformed*. The reader may be satisfied concerning this, by consulting the very next page, where it is asserted, that in an after act, the deed of civil constitution was *farther reformed than ever before*. In this act, however, we do not find the *rooting out of heretics* more rigorously enacted, which behoved to be the case, if this was the *reformation intended*. But we find, that the king engaging to observe the reformed religion himself; and to preserve it for his subjects; his family, and counsellors to act agreeably thereto; and to rule his people agreeable to the word; is the substance of the act, and what the answers call the civil constitution *reformed*.

From these few remarks, it is evident, that what the presbytery call the civil constitution reformed, is the king engaged at his coronation, to observe the true religion himself; to preserve it for his subjects; and rule them agreeable to the word. Might not the presbytery approve of this, without approving of *rooting out* of heretics, or what you call bloody Popish principles? Your demonstration, Sir, is mere assertion; and whether you are the *dunce*, or *deceiver*, in this quotation, you can best determine.

Perhaps you may object, that the presbytery, in their answers, did not declare their disapprobation of *rooting out* of heretics. This is very easily accounted for; they were not, like some others, fired with an itch to aggrandize their charac-



ter among the gallies of the age, by reviling their worthy ancestors. They considered it as sufficient, in a general way, to conclude their approbation of these acts, by declaring, that they did not mean that there were no defects, imprudencies, or mistakes in them, or in the management of them, as the reader will see by consulting the answers, p. 49.

In a former publication, he allows, that Seceders disclaim these bloody principles; but mauls them without mercy, for the *inconsistency* of allowing them to continue in their standard books.—I reply; That it is not an easy matter to convince us, that Mr. Hutchison understands our books of received principles better than ourselves; and we are not yet convinced that they contain any such principles. — It may not be improper however, to consider, if Mr. Hutchison steers clear of this inconsistency. He informs us once and again, that he approves of the Westminster Confession; that all their ministers declare their approbation of it at their ordination. He will certainly allow this to be one of *his* books of *received principles*. Now although I am abundantly satisfied, that our Confession does not maintain bloody principles; I aver, that the expressions are as strong, and as liable to be misconstrued, as any in our Testimony. The reader may consult chap. xxiii. That ‘ the magistrate hath authority to take order, that unity and peace be preserved;—that blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, &c. Mr. Hutchison asserts, Animad. p. 19. That it would be an amiable expression of Christian charity, for the civil magistrate to build and endow places of worship for the erroneous while he held their errors in abhorrence. But his book of received principles, I mean the Confession, declares that the magistrate has authority, and that it is his duty to *suppress* them. It is not the usual way of suppressing errors and heresy, to *build* and *endow* places of worship for the broacher or abettors of them. To build and *endow* places of worship Sir, is exceedingly like an establishment. You can easily prove that a general or *national* establishment, although in favour of truth, is foreign to the nature of the Christian church, p. 19. but a *particular* establishment in favour of *error*, is an *amiable expression of Christian charity*. Are you not a mere trifle with God, and men, and with your own conscience, to

maintain, that the civil magistrate should, in this manner, encourage and countenance errors and heresies, and pretend to approve of our Confession, which declares that it is his duty to *suppress* them? To maintain, as you do, that if the civil magistrate interfere in the least with the religious opinions of the subject; or if he attempt to suppress heresies, even by allowing the broachers of them ONLY a *negative* or *passive* toleration, with-holding all countenance and encouragement from them; it is persecution for conscience sake, popery, bloody principles, &c.; but you solemnly approve of our Confession, which declares, that it is his duty to take order that unity be preserved, heresies suppressed, corruptions in worship and discipline reformed. What a prodigious bluster should we have heard, had you found any thing equally strong in our Testimony? You should certainly rid your standard book of these bloody principles, for bloody ones they must be, according to your reasoning.

The reader's attention to the following observation is requested, that he may see the whole foundation of Mr. Hutchison's charge distinctly. Seceders have declared their approbation of the countenance given by the civil magistrate, to the true religion, during the reformation periods. In doing this, they had occasion to quote acts of church and state, in which some *severe measures* were adopted.—It is no way surprising, that severe measures, in some instances, were adopted by our ancestors; if it is considered, that their liberties, religion, and lives, were in the utmost danger. The Seceders, not being very fond of reviling their godly progenitors, have expressed their disapprobation of the *severe measures* in these acts, rather in a general way: Signifying, that by approving of these acts, they do not mean, that there were no defects, mistakes, mismanagement, or imprudencies, contained in them. Now, it is the whole foundation of Mr. Hutchison's charge, that they have not adopted his dialect, branding their reforming ancestors with popery, persecution, bloody principles, &c. Can any charge be more groundless? When we have publicly declared our disapprobation of violent measures, and you cannot adduce a single syllable from our Testimony approving of them; your persisting, Sir, to charge

us with bloody principles, is an evidence of your supreme delight in traducing and quibbling; and cannot be better expressed than in the words of the Poet.

He would rather on a gibbet dangle,  
 Than miss his *dear* delight to *wrangle* :  
 In which his parts were so *accomplish'd*,  
 That *right*, or *wrong*, he ne'er was *nonpluss'd* ;  
 For though his topics, *frail* and *weak*,  
 Could ne'er amount above a *freak*,  
 He back'd their *feeble* want of *sense*,  
 With greater *heat* and confidence.

You inform me, that these who knew Mr. Neil's character, will never believe what I have pointed out from his own express words. I may return you the compliment, by informing you, that every one who is acquainted with the character of Seceders, *derides*, *laughs*, at your charge of bloody principles; it is your own character, not ours, which bleeds by it \*. The rest of your *feeble decrepid* arguments concerning toleration; or confident assertions rather, supported only by *egometical* authority; will probably be canvassed to purpose by another hand.

## S E C T. VII.

*Mr. Hutchison's Defence of Relief Doctrines examined.*

I Shall now proceed to consider what he has advanced, concerning the doctrinal errors which I formerly pointed out in Relief publications. Here I have the pleasure to inform the reader, that he gives up with the most part of them. He seems, however, to be considerably piqued, because he cannot defend, and therefore endeavours to evade, by alledging, that their writers did not mean any thing injurious to the freedom of gospel grace; and strains every nerve to defend the ensnaring expressions: and the reader must judge for himself, if he

\* He owns, that Seceders have publicly declared their disapprobation of compulsory measures, but he finds these contained in some acts of parliament which they quote for a very *different* purpose; therefore they are certainly chargeable with them. If they approve of *one thing* in an act, they approve of *every thing* in it, although they have publicly declared their disapprobation. Irresistible demonstration!



always steers clear of defending the unscriptural tenets themselves. I am likewise charged with squeezing their words to a sense which they will not bear, making no allowance, &c. When I apprehended, that they did not really mean that which appeared to me the natural sense of their expressions, I several times observed it, but of this he takes no notice. It is very probable I might misunderstand their meaning; for it is easy to demonstrate, that no man can understand the meaning of a Relief writer, till he has explained it, and explained that explication. Mr. Ramsay had censured Mr. Neil, and very justly, for maintaining that *baptism* constitutes the child a member of the visible church. Well, says Mr. Hutchison, and with an air of confidence too, to *constitute* signifies to *make*; but to *make* sometimes signifies to *manifest* or *declare*, and consequently to *constitute* one a member of the visible church, signifies only to *declare* him such. Now, because in one particular instance, the word *make* signifies to *manifest* or *declare*, could any man in the world guess, that by *constituting*, a Relief writer means *manifesting* or *declaring*? That when Mr. Hutchison speaks of *constituting* a presbytery, he means *declaring* one?—Mr. Ramsay blames Mr. Neil for speaking of *terms* of mercy. Mr. Hutchison replies, I humbly apprehend he means *fruits* of saving mercy, and proper evidences of a saving interest in it. Accordingly, when a Relief writer speaks of *terms* of mercy, he means the *fruits* and *evidences* of it. In other words, when he speaks of the *purchase*, he means the *purchased blessings*; when he speaks of the *condition*, or *terms*, he means the *blessings* exhibited on the footing of such condition or terms performed. Can any man be blamed for misunderstanding their meaning, till they have explained it, and again explained that explication? Nor need any man charge them with error, for their meaning is the direct opposite of their expressions.—In the beginning of this section, I find myself designed *this heresy-hunter*. No friend to the freedom of gospel grace, can be much moved at this, as it is the common sneer of heretics, at these who detect them. The wisest of kings, divinely directed, informs us of foxes, and little PUNY ones too, who were nevertheless to be *taken*, lest the tender grapes should be injured. An inspired apostle exhorts

us to contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints: and as I am not yet convinced of exceeding scripture direction, the snarls of heretics give me very little concern, nor will my opponent aggrandise his character by adopting their peculiar phrases.

I am likewise classed with Mr. Ramsay, as being animated by the same motives. As I am entirely satisfied, that Mr. Ramsay's motives are laudable, I consider this as an undesigned commendation. It is true, our brethren and we disagree in some particulars, and perhaps the breach considerably widened by jealousies and misunderstandings, which may in time be removed, without aggrrieving any man's conscience; which I am persuaded would be matter of joy to every one, on both sides, who wishes well to religion. But how Mr. Hutchison comes to be so well acquainted with our *internal obstructions*, our inward motives also, and springs of action, is not a little mysterious.

As the errors I condescended upon are numerous, I am afraid of prolixity, if I either repeat every one, or enlarge.

In p. 8. Compendious View, he asserted, 'The rest of the human race were passed by in the decree of election,' which appeared to me a confounding of the decree of election and reprobation. In defence of this, he informs his reader, 'My meaning is, that the reprobate part of mankind, were not included in the decree of election, but passed by.' But the question is, Was this *passing by* a branch of the decree of election, or was it a branch of the decree of reprobation? and it is yet unanswered: His argumentative *no-such thing*, is assertion, not proof. He likewise professes his belief, that *actual* as well as original sin is the cause of damnation. The question is not, what Mr. Hutchison believes, but did he assert any such thing in the passage quoted? No, verily.

In the same page, he asserted, That 'our Saviour was not included in Adam's federal representation, that he might be free from the imputation of his sin.' This seems to imply, that he might have been included, and liable to the imputation of Adam's sin. He replies, 'Because I say he was *not* included in it, and assign a reason why he was *not*, nor *could*.'—I is much in favour of my remark, Sir, that in order to disprove

‘ it you are exceedingly pinched to keep by the truth. The words *nor could*, are an addition ; it is only *now* that you say so, no such thing in your Compendious View ; a plain enough evidence, you are conscious my remark was just, however strenuously you deny it. It is excellent reasoning for a man to revile, at the same time, that he is obliged to confess. He adds in defence, ‘ When the Psalmist says of God, P<sup>sal</sup>. li. ‘ That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest. You ‘ might have alledged, That David’s assertion implied that God ‘ might be unjust.’ I can see no similarity between this and the point in hand, but only this, that the word *THAT* is in the *text*. Divines of the first character, expound it in the following manner, and the truth of their exposition obvious to common sense. David confessed his sin, that the Lord might *appear* to be just, or that it might be *evident* that he was just in speaking against, and chastening him. Had you asserted, that since our Lord’s human nature, neither *was*, nor *could* be included in Adam’s representation, this must be an undoubted *evidence*, that he neither was, nor *could* be liable for himself, to the imputation of Adam’s sin ; it was *truth*, and the text to your purpose, but not otherwise ; although it is hard to say what sense of the text, one of your distinguished abilities may discover — In a word, as our Lord’s human nature never was a person, he *could* not be liable to the imputation of Adam’s sin ; for it is not merely *human nature*, but the *persons* of Adam’s offspring who are liable to the imputation of his sin. You mention divines, Sir, whose writings are savoury to many ; but are you certain, that like you, they would have defended every mode of expression which might inadvertently drop from their pen ? I have no such apprehension.

He asserted, p. 10. concerning the Saviour’s body and soul, ‘ That from the moment of his conception, they subsisted in ‘ union unto his divine personality, as the Son of God.’ I considered this as implying, that his body and soul were united the very moment of conception. He replies, ‘ I take conception here not in a strict, but in a large sense, when the soul ‘ is united unto the body in the womb.’ His large sense, however, is not the usual sense of the word, nor did he give the remotest hint of his large sense till now ; but you can never



be certain of our author's meaning, by the ordinary sense of his expressions. In defence of his large sense, he quotes the Psalmist's declaration, ' In sin did my mother conceive me ;' and alledges, that in this text, *conception* must refer to the time when soul and body were united. But why we *must* depart from the usual signification of the word *conception*, and understand it in our author's large sense, is more than I can tell. No valid reason can be assigned, why *conception* should respect the time when soul and body were united ; when the former clause, *I was shapen in iniquity*, evidently respects the very first formation of the body. The reason which our author assigns for his large sense of conception in this passage, is utterly inconclusive. Till soul and body were united, says he, the Psalmist could be a sinner, neither by imputation, nor inhesion. This argument plainly imports, that it is absurd to imagine, that Adam's sin can be imputed, till soul and body are united. But if so, whence is it, that the soul is created without original righteousness ? We cannot reconcile this with the holiness of God, without supposing, that in creating the soul, he acts in the character of a righteous Judge, with-holding original righteousness, as a punishment of Adam's sin imputed.—Again, if it is absurd to alledge, that Adam's sin can be imputed, till soul and body are united, whence does the *corrupt constitution* of our bodies proceed ? That our body is so framed, as to prove a snare to the soul, is what none but Socinians, and such as impugn the doctrine of original sin, will deny. But this corrupt constitution commences at the very first formation of the body, as is evident from the preceding clause, ' I was shapen in iniquity.' Now, how can we reconcile this with the justice and holiness of God, without considering it as a consequence of Adam's sin imputed unto his offspring ? Our author's necessity of departing from the usual acceptation of the word *conception*, in this passage, is an entire fiction, or something worse, being a thrust at the justice and holiness of the Judge of all the earth. Till some other evasion is invented, his large sense is of no avail to him.—In opposition unto the Saviour's soul and body, being united in the moment of conception, I adduced the common argument, that he was made like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted. This

argument, he pretends to turn against me. The Redeemer's human nature, says he, was formed in an extraordinary manner; he was born of a virgin; he was not like his brethren in these; but neither of them were sinful. The reply is easy: I demand a proof, that either of these rendered the Redeemer's human nature, soul and body, unlike his brethren: no such thing. The manner of formation and birth, did not, in the smallest degree, render his human nature unlike his brethren; and it is not the *manner of formation*, but the *nature formed* concerning which we enquire. But if the Redeemer's soul and body were united the *moment of conception*, the nature itself was not like his brethren. Their human nature is incomplete, till soul and body are united; if his never was so, the *nature itself* was not like theirs. Till something else is adduced, I am in very little hazard from my own argument. My friend has only his *large sense* of the word conception to offer in his own defence; and it is not improbable, that his large sense is like many clandestine marriages, which are not thought of till necessity urge.

On this particular, he speaks of our Lord's human nature united to his divine *personality*. Had he satisfied himself merely with using the expression, it might have passed for an inadvertency; but as he strenuously defends it against Mr. Ramsay, and tells him, with an air of confidence, that when he has performed the mighty feat of showing the world the difference between Christ's *person* and his *personality*, the ingenuity of the *quibbler* will clearly appear: it may not be improper to show him, that the difference is not a mere quibble.—The expressions, DIVINE PERSON, and DIVINE PERSONALITY, are evidently *distinct*, and convey very different ideas. According to orthodox divines, a PERSON in the Godhead, is the *divine nature* subsisting with a *personal property*; but PERSONALITY is the *mode* or *manner* of subsisting. The one is expressive of the *divine nature* subsisting in a certain manner, the other expressive only of the *manner* of subsisting; and therefore cannot be synonymous expressions. This will appear obvious, if it is considered, that all *divine acts* and *operations* may, and ought to be ascribed to the PERSONS of the adorable Trinity, but cannot be ascribed to their *personality*. In the oeconomy of redemption, how frequently and justly, is the *contrivance* ascribed

ed unto the first PERSON of the Trinity, as having a peculiar agency therein, though not exclusive of the other two? In like manner the *purchase* is ascribed unto the second, and the *application* to the third PERSON of the Trinity. Now, if PERSON and PERSONALITY are of the same import, the *contrivance* of redemption may be ascribed to the Father's *personality*, the *purchase* to the *personality* of the Son, the *application* to the *personality* of the Holy Ghost. But how absurd! Personality being what the school-men stile an *abstract idea*. Our prayers are certainly to be directed to all the PERSONS of the ever blessed Trinity; but what would our author mean, should he direct his prayers unto, and plead for pardon, acceptance, and every other blessing, from the PERSONALITY of the Father, Son, or Spirit.

It is equally inconsistent to speak of our Redeemer's human nature, united only to his divine *personality*. Personality, as we have just now observed, is the *manner of subsisting*. The *manner* of the second person's subsisting, is in the way of eternal, natural, and necessary generation. To be united to his divine personality, therefore, is to be united to his *eternal generation*, or *manner* of subsisting. Nor is this a quibble, or idle speculation as our author insinuates. For, if there is no difference, as he asserts, between a *divine person*, and *divine personality*; it can make no difference, whether we maintain that our Lord's human nature was united to his *divine person*, or to his *divine personality*: but the difference is unspeakably great. When we maintain, that the Redeemer's human nature was united to his *divine person*, it natively follows, that whatever was done by him in that nature, received *infinite* worth and value from the dignity of his glorious person. But if we *only* maintain, that his human nature was united to his *divine personality*, in this case, nothing done by him in that nature, could derive worth or value from the dignity of his glorious person; since it was united *only* to his *personality*, or *manner* of subsisting, and accordingly a most important article of gospel doctrine overthrown. You may just as consistently talk, Sir, of the body united unto the soul's *spirituality*, or of a son united unto his father's *paternity*, as of our Lord's human nature united to his *personality*.



From this cursory glance, the reader may judge, whether Mr. Ramsay's *ingenuity* is most *eclipsed*, or Mr. Hutchison's *penetration displayed*, by the *quibbling* distinction. You should really forbear attacking Mr. Ramsay on doctrinal articles, Sir; you are no way match for him: this is obvious to every one. Your province, is a superficial incoherent bluster. You mention divines who have used the disapproved expression, whose memory will probably be *forgotten* in the churches, when yours and mine are buried in oblivion. But, are you certain that they would have quibbled in defence of every inadvertent expression, and snarled at every one who attempted to rectify it? Their well-known character forbids entertaining any such idea of them.

In the same page, he mentions only the dignity of the Redeemer's person, as the reason why his sufferings were not eternal. He does not refuse what I suggested on this particular, but informs me, that he never meant, that one reason should be two. This is judicious; it is sublime!—He likewise informs his reader, that it is curious to see the inconsistency of Associate writers; that Mr. Ramsay blames him for illustrating some points too much, and Mr. Walker for illustrating others too little. Had we asserted this of the same particulars, it was certainly inconsistent. But as this is not alledged, it is no proof of inconsistency, as it is certainly *possible* that Mr. Hutchison might illustrate some particulars too much, and others too little; unless his charge is founded on a tacit claim to *infallibility*.—I add, it is curious to see, how impracticable it is, for a Relief writer to be candid. Is it fact, Sir, that I blame you for illustrating some particulars too little? Nay, it is not. I blame you for mentioning only *one* reason, which you never meant should be two, and when a second was equally necessary; and especially in a system, where particulars should be numerous, and illustrations short. Narrate the truth, and the inconsistency of Associate writers, such a curiosity in your apprehension, at once evanishes.

In page 111. he speaks of the certainty of salvation being purchased. It is still mysterious to me, how the certainty of salvation can be a matter of purchase. He asks me, how the

sure mercies of David could be the matter of a purchase. Except the word *sure*, there is noting to his purpose, in the text to which he alludes. I ask him, in my turn, where is the *certainty* or *sureness* of these mercies, said to be the matter of a purchase? It is only by himself. The blessings themselves were purchased by a Redeemer's blood; the justice and faithfulness of the God of truth render them *sure*. He leaves this particular just as he found it: his unmeaning query has not so much as the appearance of a reply.

I expressed my dislike of his arrangement, p. 13. in giving us first an account of *duties* to be performed, and then of *doctrines* to be believed. He replies, that in scripture, the arrangement which I mention is frequently inverted. I answer, Many places of scripture are not delivered in the systematic form. From a system like yours, Sir, we expect to be informed not only of doctrines and duties, but of their *order*, *connection* with, and *dependance* upon one another. If your arrangement is systematic, duties must lead the van. Perhaps it is a branch of your Christian liberty, not only to despise other writers of systems; our Westminster divines also, Q. 3.; but even the apostle Paul, who in most of his epistles, (which are an excellent model for *ordinary* writers of systems) gives us first an account of gospel doctrines, and then of duties to be performed in the strength of gospel grace.

In p. 17. he mentions the calls, commands, and invitations of the word, as the grounds of faith. This, I observed, confounds the grounds of faith, with a warrant, or rather an indispensable obligation to believe. He cannot deny this. But in order to exculpate himself, I only mean, says he, that they 'give a right to sinners to believe in Christ.—And if our author denies this, he is not sound in the faith.' I need not scruple much to deny this, and my soundness in the faith in very little danger. I observe, that calls and commands belong to the gospel only, when it is considered in an extensive sense, including the whole dispensation of it: the gospel, strictly speaking, does not include calls, commands, precepts, &c.: calls and commands belong properly to the law; and the law's command to believe on Christ, *supposes* the sinner's *right*, but does not *give* it. Christ and all his benefits, *freely gifted*

unto sinners in the gospel, *gives* them an unquestionable *right* to receive; the calls and commands which belong to the law do not *give* them a right, but bind and oblige them, on pain of eternal damnation, to improve the *right conveyed* unto them in and by the *gospel gift*. You have explained your meaning once on this particular, and in order to render it orthodox, it will be requisite to explain it yet a second time. The calls and commands do not *convey a right* to believe on Christ, but *suppose* it, and oblige the sinner to improve it. Your proof of my unsoundness in the faith, because I deny that calls and commands *give* the sinner a *right* to believe, shall be attended unto. *Soundness and unsoundness* in the faith, Sir, is a subject on which you should never be very peremptory, but always leave room to explain your meaning once and again.

I expressed my disapprobation of his doctrine, p. 17. concerning SAVING convictions issuing in conversion. Here he breaths out a cluster of heavy charges, *limiting the Spirit, modesty might have taught him, modern triflers, &c.* Now, where my friend's charges are very weighty, the reader may generally expect a distinguished specimen of his candor in supporting them. Through the whole of this particular, he endeavours to make his reader believe, that I refuse convictions, *of any sort*, before regeneration; whereas it is plain to a school-boy, that the whole of my reasoning, is pointed at his SAVING convictions before regeneration. It is evident almost in every sentence. He seems to be sensible of this, for he entirely mangles my words in quoting them. The reader may judge if it has not every *appearance* of design. My words are, 'according to this account, a man may have convictions, which are SAVING, ten or twenty years before regeneration.' His quotation runs, 'Our author says, according to this account, a man may have convictions, ten or twenty years before regeneration,' and with quotation marks, as my identical words — The reader will observe, that the word SAVING is in capitals, that it might not be in any man's power, much less a first-rate divine, to mistake at what my reasoning was pointed. He not only omits the capitals, but the words, *which are saving*, upon which the sense evidently turns, are dropt out altogether. I ask the reader, if he can believe that this was undesigned?



Or, if he can distinguish between this, and publishing a *down-right falsehood*? I cannot conceive what he intends by such glaring misrepresentation, if it is not to dissuade every one from answering him, as utterly unworthy of attention, incapable of being reasoned with, and deserving no reply. There is not a single syllable in any thing I advanced, which has the remotest connexion with refusing conviction of *any kind* before regeneration: And any thing *SAVING* about a sinner, ten or twenty years before regeneration, is absolutely ridiculous, a fiction of his own fancy. The following egomet, is all the defence he offers: ‘ Those convictions, I call saving, which issue in regeneration.’ And are they *saving*, Sir, because you call them so? A forcible argument, truly!—According to this doctrine, there must be a specific difference between the convictions of the elect before regeneration, and the convictions of the non-elect; the one is, while the other is NOT *SAVING*. Your proof, of any thing *saving* about the sinner, before he is united unto Christ, by the Spirit, in regeneration, will be very obliging.

You tell us, that it is a doctrine of long standing in the church. If you mean the doctrine of your *SAVING* convictions before regeneration, however individuals may have expressed themselves on this subject, you may inform us at your leisure, what protestant church has maintained, that any thing *SAVING* is wrought in the sinner, not only *in order of nature* before faith, but which only issues in faith at length. Nay, although all the churches in Christendom should maintain this, it will not be an easy matter to convince some of the truth of it, while the apostle maintains that whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and that can never be of faith, which is before it, even in order of time, and only sooner or later issues in it. A palpable misrepresentation, and magisterial *I call them so*, is all his defence, as yet, of his *SAVING* convictions before faith.

In page 19. he asserted, ‘ That when the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner, it is as pleadable by him, as if it had been wrought out in his own person.’ If words have any determinate meaning, this plainly implies, that it was not *as pleadable* by the sinner before. A defence is impracticable; he prudently reckons it sufficient to deny the very

plainest consequence, and expresses himself justly enough, when he is once set to rights.

I signified my dislike of his order, in the same page, in placing a title to heaven in justification, before the pardon of sin; and that the order of our standards is preferable in my view. He cannot defend his order; but as he must needs say something or other, he asserts, that they are at the same time; and asks me, if they are not. I ask again, Can there be no order in nature, without a difference in time? I reply further, If his former doctrine is true, that pardon is completed, no man knows when, they cannot be at the same time. His *assertion* and *question*, have not the remotest connection with his *order*, but he must be allowed to quibble; it will satisfy the ignorant.

Having introduced a branch of the *Marrow* doctrine, concerning the pardon of sin, p. 20. he expressed himself in a manner exceedingly confused, the common case with all who oppose that doctrine. I accordingly pointed out a variety of particulars, which appeared to me very exceptionable. He cannot defend them, but alleges that I *toil* and *sweat* for nine pages, although it was by far the easiest branch of the whole. He adds, that I discover much better talents for making *clear* things *dark*, &c. It is a lucky hit, that I have talents of any kind, and it is surprising how admirably my talents are adapted to my opponent's complexion. It would seem, that *darkening* a thing, is the effectual method to *enlighten* him, for he will not follow me through my *winding prolixity*; but he gives the reader, a short distinct summary of the very sentiments I advanced; and entirely different from his former account of this branch of doctrine. The reason why he does not follow me, is no mystery at all. He cannot point out a single particular that I opposed, which is not the native consequence of his own expressions; nor can he refute a single sentiment I advanced, consistent with the account he *now* gives us of the point in dispute. But, as I am very glad he has come to my hand, it would be indiscreet to insult.

He concludes his defence of the *Compendious View*, by informing his reader, that he cannot but blame me for charging him with a number of tenets, which he abhors as much as I.

I reply, if I have charged him with approving of these tenets, it was inadvertently; I only intended to maintain, that they are the *native consequences* of his express assertions; and in this case, I could be no proper judge of his abhorings. A man may abhor a tenet, while he has not the common sagacity to understand, that it is the native consequence of his own assertions. I 'scruple at nothing, however inconsistent with truth.' Your proof, Sir; are you capable to point out a single falshood which I have asserted? You are not, nor do you so much as attempt it. You should have marked out the falshoods, as you went along; be sure always to maul a thief where you find him. This would have put in my power to defend; but a general charge, while you are unable to adduce a single instance, or we should no doubt have heard of it, is difficult to disprove. Can you point out the place, where I have suppressed a whole branch of a sentence, marked out with capitals, as that on which the sense hinges; and at the same time, by quotation marks, represented it as your identical words? After you have acted such a part once and again, were you capable of blushing, you could never mention the want of candor.

Thus I have considered his defence of the Compendious View. I desire the reader to consider, if Mr. Hutchison has supported a single tenet which I disapproved of; or if he has refuted a single sentiment which I have advanced. What he intends by it is difficult to conjecture.

He proceeds, p. 88. to vindicate the exceptionable tenets, which I pointed, out in the writings of the late Rev. Mr. Neil.

I expressed my disapprobation of Mr. Neil's inferring our need of an interest in Christ, for the *defects* and *failures* in our duty. Mr. Hutchison replies, If we need an interest in Christ, to answer for our defects in one duty, we need it for our defects in all duties. Very true, Sir; but we need an interest in the Redeemer for the acceptance of our persons, and not only for *defects* and *failures*, but for every thing in our duties, good or bad. Whereas this doctrine is well calculated to make sinners apprehend, that they need an interest in Christ, only for *defects* and *failures* in duty.



Mr. Neil asserts, that none need to be deceived if they take heed to themselves. I again exclaim, Is this like preaching the gospel to blinded sinners! It is not too gross, however, for Mr. Hutchison to vindicate.—In defence, he replies, If men exercise their rational powers, they need not be deceived with respect to the truth in Mr. Neil's text. It would be a favour to the public, would he give them a distinct account, how far the exercise of their rational powers will bear them out, in their lapsed condition; and where the necessity of divine aid commences. Besides, his insinuation, that Mr. Neil confined his assertion to the truth contained in his text, is a downright farce. Mr. Neil quotes the Saviour's direction, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest any man deceive you,' and informs us, that this direction would be to no purpose, unless his assertion is just, that men need not be deceived. But the Saviour's direction includes such things as (if it were possible) would deceive the very elect. It is therefore the native consequence of Mr. Neil's doctrine, that if men would take heed to themselves, they need not be deceived by these things, which (if it were possible) would deceive the elect. And which is equally gross, that the Saviour's direction is to no purpose, if sinners cannot comply. I leave the reader to judge for himself, if this is not considerably similar to their sentiments, who maintain, that it is absurd to alledge, that God requires any thing of us, which we have not power to perform. How destitute of any thing like common candor, to alledge, that he confined his assertion to the truth contained in his text?—Here my opponent provides a safe retreat for heretics. Suppose the preacher's subject is the duty of attending on gospel ordinances. Well, he informs his hearers, without any restriction, that if they would take heed to themselves, they need not be deceived; and that divine directions are to no purpose, if they *cannot* obtemperate. But if some heresy-hunter should get hold of this, the preacher meant only the truth in his text; can men not attend on ordinances, or need they be deceived with respect to this being their indispensable duty? Mr. Neil's assertion, restricted to the truth in his text, is the sum of my opponent's defence, and the slightest glance at the sermon, will convince any man that it is not fact.

I expressed my dislike of Mr. Neil's assertion, that, 'The Son of God died,—that his throne of grace might be accessible to all penitent offenders.'—My friend replies in vindication, Mr. Neil does not assert, that impenitent sinners have no access to a throne of grace. I reply, Neither does he assert that they have, although the glorious truth he mentions, natively led him to proclaim access unto all, if there is such a thing. Here he again provides a safe retreat for heretics. According to this vindication, a Relief preacher may confine the gospel call, all his life-time, to *penitent offenders*. But if any of the more orthodox should disapprove, he may reply, and with an air of confidence too; that he does not expressly assert, that others have no access to the throne of grace; that *shunning* to declare the *whole* counsel of God is no-crime, if he does not expressly assert any thing directly opposite. I ask the reader, does not my friend discover himself to be an excellent *heresy protector*?

Mr. Neil likewise insists on repentance before faith, and before remission of sins. This I considered as contrary to the truth of the gospel. Our author defends the first, but overlooks the last. In defence of the first, he quotes Gal. v. from ver. 22. where a variety of graces are mentioned before faith. It is pretty evident, however, that the Spirit of God in that passage, does not state any order or connection among the graces there mentioned; whereas there is some reason to think, that Mr. Neil designedly does so. By consulting his sermons, the reader will perhaps find that it is not once only, he makes choice of this arrangement. That he has a view to order and connection, with respect to repentance before pardon, is undeniable. Lest we should mistake his design, he tells us, Repentance in the FIRST place, and THEN remission of sins. I refer the reader to what I formerly adduced in opposition to this, and have received no reply.

I observed, that Mr. Neil's assertion, 'That it is the foundation of the spiritual life to renounce the flesh,' implies, that it is something done by ourselves, which is the foundation of spiritual life. Our author alledges, that Mr. Neil's meaning is entirely different from the ordinary signification of his expressions, and that he explains his meaning afterward, when

he speaks of the soul, as 'actually recovered by the healing power of divine grace.' It was necessary to inform your reader, Sir, how this is an explication of Mr. Neil's meaning. It can only be an evidence, that like the Baxterians his doctrine is a jumble of inconsistency. Every Baxterian will allow of the healing power of divine grace, or talk at times in scripture language; and maintain, at the same time, that the power of grace proceeds on the footing of their renouncing the flesh, or something done by themselves; and they mean not at all to disclaim their legal notions. Your assertion proves nothing else concerning Mr. Neil.—The reader will observe, that renouncing the flesh (or something done by ourselves) held forth as the foundation of spiritual life, is irreproveable doctrine in the Relief.

Mr. Neil's doctrine, That 'holiness is the foundation of all inward peace and comfort,' appeared to me considerably gross, and undisguised. It is plain as a sun-beam to my opponent, that Mr. Neil does not mean to insinuate any thing legal, although it is the plain import of his words; and adduces a conclusive argument in support of his opinion. Why, in the same page, says he, Mr. Neil asserts, That God 'has so constituted our nature, as to establish an inseparable connection between holiness and happiness, sin and misery.' It is the sum of this argument, that Mr. Neil could have no *legal* meaning, because he asserts that which no *legalist* in the world denies. Did the reader ever hear of legalists denying the connection between holiness and happiness? Instead of denying, it is the very soul of their scheme, that their holiness, independent of Christ's blood and Spirit, is connected with happiness. According to his defence of the former particular, a Baxterian cannot maintain inconsistencies; according to this one, a legalist cannot maintain a connection between holiness and happiness; and there cannot be a connection, except holiness be the foundation of happiness. Profound reasoning! It is very fortunate for you, Sir, that you have only a SIMPLETON to oppose you, or he could never refrain from the keenest derision, to see you venting such childish absurdities, as are an affront to common sense; and in order to cover error's ugly face, not for *execution*, but *protection*.



I observed, that expressing ourselves concerning prayer, as if a God of infinite perfection were thereby wrought upon; in the same manner, that our piteous complaints may work upon our fellow-creatures of like passions with ourselves; is likely to make many misunderstand the nature, and design of the duty. Mr. Hutchison replies, The scriptures speak of God in this manner, that I allow it. I answer, the scriptures give us to understand, that this is speaking of God after the manner of men, which Mr. Neil does not. Our author may disprove any sentiment I have advanced concerning prayer, if he can; I know he cannot.

Mr. Neil's doctrine, That 'our Lord is willing to save all, who are willing to be saved in that way which he proposes in the gospel,' appears to me to exclude, the *sinner's being made willing* from being a branch of Christ's saving work; to confine the Redeemer's willingness to these who are willing. Mr. Hutchison answers, that Christ declares the same thing, and quotes John vi. 37. 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' If our author imagine, that this text respects only these who are *willing*, I beg leave to differ from him. The Saviour declares, in the preceding clause, that all these who are given him shall come to him; and that none might think themselves excluded from access, he adds, 'Him that cometh,' without any restriction or limitation, 'I will in no wise cast out.' Of the same import with that declaration, 'Whosoever will, let him come.' When Mr. Neil declares, that penitent sinners have access, did he at the same time, like the Saviour, proclaim access unto all, there would be no ground of reprehension. He adds, That Mr. Neil does not deny, that it is a principal branch of Christ's saving work to make sinners willing.—But does he assert it? No such thing. Besides, when he asserts that Christ is *willing* to save these who *are willing*; if words have any certain meaning, it implies, that they must first be *willing*, before our Lord is *willing* to save them; and how then can it be a branch of his saving work? it makes his *will* to depend upon their's, while the very reverse is true.

I likewise expressed my dislike of Mr. Neil's asserting, that

God hath given himself to all that believe and obey him. It is evident from the scope of the words, that he does not mean a giving *in possession*, but in the *gospel offer*. I accordingly observed, that the declaration, 'I am the Lord thy God' is directed *unto all*. Here my friend has again recourse to his usual evasion; if he gives himself to all, he certainly gives himself to these who believe and obey him. But the question is this, Sir, Does Mr. Neil's expression bear, that he gives himself to all, or the reverse, and you make no reply. The reader will observe, that it is the plain import of Mr. Hutchison's hackneyed reply, that *shunning* to declare the whole counsel of God, is no way reproveable in a Relief preacher; if he has as much sagacity, as not expressly to contradict it. An exceedingly honourable defence for almost every particular!

It is plain as broad day, that Mr. Neil's doctrine concerning *faith entitling us to the heavenly glory*; substitutes our faith in the room of the righteousness which it receives. This is so obvious, that it draws forth the strength of my opponent's derisive talents, my *sensible phraseology*, &c. He replies, 'If so, what will become of the orthodoxy of Paul, who says, Rom. iii. 28. That *a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*?' This is reasoning so profound, that no man in the world can sound its depth. Can you show any man the similarity, between *faith entitling us to heaven*; and being justified by faith as a *mean*? Could you adduce the apostle asserting, that *faith entitles us to justification*, you might then assert, that it *entitles to heaven also*; but the apostle abhorred such legal doctrines. It is neither faith, nor any thing in ourselves whatever, but the righteousness of Christ *alone* which *entitles us to every blessing*. If you know any thing of the original, the words rendered *by faith*, literally signify, *by means of faith*, or *by faith as a mean*; but the ordinary meaning of the word *entitle* is very different; it signifies the *procuring cause*. The hireling's work *entitles him to his wages*; this is the plain and common sense of the word.

Your reasoning, Sir, is very curious. The sum of it is this. The apostle asserts, that we are justified *by faith*, or

that it is the *mean* in our justification; and therefore we may assert, that faith *entitles* us unto, or that it is the *procuring cause* of the heavenly glory. This is sublime! it is to excel! He asks, am 'I able to prove, that Mr. Neil might not teach ' that a man is entitled to heaven by faith in Christ, in the ' same sense Paul teaches that a man is justified by faith?' It is generally hard to prove a negative; but here it is no difficulty: for the apostle never teaches that faith entitles to any thing whatever. The reader will observe, that it is orthodox doctrine in the Relief, that faith entitles us to heaven; for *entitling*, in the mouth of a Relief preacher, signifies only the *means* of entitling.

As a conclusion to his vindication of Mr. Neil's errors, he informs his reader, that I have 'discovered a new plan of fixing heresies. He very charitably makes all Mr. Neil's errors ' mine, because he is certain I have read his sermons.' He likewise informs his reader, that he has read only part of them. May we give you credit for this, Sir? That you began to read a volume of sermons, whose author, in your esteem, was a burning and shining light; and when several years are elapsed you have read only *part* of them? You have certainly met with something exceedingly disgusting, if this is not of a piece with what follows. Through the whole of this serious Descant he maintains, that I charge him with Mr. Neil's errors, *MERELY* because he has *read* or *perused* the sermons. After what the reader has already seen of our author's strict attachment to truth, he will be no way surprized to understand that my words are, 'It cannot be supposed that he never perused them. He ' knows they are common among these in connexion with him. ' He commends the author without the least exception to any of ' his doctrines, or caution to his reader. 'Telling us, he not ' only filled, but *adorned* his station in the church.' Can any thing be more distant from truth, than to assert, that I charge him with these errors, *merely* because he has read the sermons: I might ask my Relief friends, what opinion they entertain of their Chieftain's candor? I still apprehend, that the plan of fixing heresy, whether new or old, is no unjust one. If I extol an author as a star of the first magnitude, without the least exception to his doctrines, although they are crammed with error



or caution to my people, although his writings are common among their hands: I know very little difference between this, and teaching the same errors myself. It were too much respect to his following scene of drollery, founded on falshood, to pay the least attention to it; for, good man, he has entirely forgot, that the priest's lips should keep *truth* as well as *knowledge*. It is true, he is evidently jesting; but it was an observation of one, that to *fib* in jest, was to go *laughing to* ——— Do you really imagine, Sir, that there is no sin, in his Reverence dealing deep in LAUGHING *misrepresentation*? It is a glaring evidence of a wretched cause, when it cannot be supported, but by such disgraceful methods.

He proceeds, p. 92. to vindicate the ensnaring expressions contained in Mr. Baine's discourses: And introduces himself with a flourishing panegyric on Mr. Baine. It is a matter to me although he were an angel from heaven; if he preach another gospel, I am warranted to withstand him to the face. When Mr. Baine frequently restricts the gospel call to the *penitent*, and these who *feel* their need; I observed, that this is evidently calculated to persuade them, that their right to receive the blessing is founded upon their penitency; and to make others apprehend, that they are unwarranted intermedlers. Mr. Hutchison replies: If sinners, without exception, may take the benefit of the gospel, these who feel their need certainly may; and therefore Mr. Baine's doctrine is true. This only strengthens my argument; for, if sinners, without exception, may take the benefit of the gospel, who authorizes Mr. Baine, or any man, to be almost ever singling out a particular character, or two? Our author considers it as a sufficient vindication, that Mr. Baine's doctrine *is true*. The native consequence is, that if the particulars on which a Relief minister insists *are true*; let him *conceal* as much of the *truth* as he will, his doctrine is *true*, he is irrefragable. Mr. Hutchison may preach during life, that Jesus was the supposed Son of Joseph, but never inform his hearers that he is the great God our Saviour: his doctrine is as certainly true as Mr. Baine's; accordingly he cannot be blamed. How ridiculous such a defence! These who have any acquaintance with the pride of the human heart, how natural it is for sinners to bring a price in their hand, will readily

acknowledge, that if calls and invitations directed to the penitent, are not well guarded, and others shown their unquestionable right, they are likely to ensnare many. Our author may show where Messrs. Baine or Neil, have annexed a single caution to their numerous restricted calls.

I observed, that Mr. Baine's intention to preserve the gospel from any charge of licentiousness is laudable; although my opponent is certain, that I make no allowance. But the expression, '*grace reigns through righteousness implanted in us;*' is exceedingly unjustifiable. This connects our inherent holiness with the Redeemer's righteousness, as the *CAUSE* of the reign of grace. My friend asks me, 'Does not grace also reign in the righteousness of sanctification?' I ask again, Does Mr. Baine assert, that grace reigns *IN* righteousness implanted? No, Sir; this is only a deceitful substitution of phrases: he asserts, that grace reigns *through* righteousness implanted.

I observed formerly, that the expression, *through* righteousness, signifies, through righteousness as the *cause*. Can you disprove it? Nay, you never attempt it; nor does Mr. Baine give the remotest hint, that he uses the phrase, in a sense entirely different from his text. It is the apostle's doctrine, that grace reigns *through* Christ's righteousness, as the *CAUSE*; and *TO* eternal life, which includes implanted holiness, as the *EFFECT*. You mention Eph. ii. 4.; I ask if there is a single syllable in the passage, concerning quickening as the *cause* of grace's reign? It is the plain import of this vindication, that grace reigning *through* implanted holiness; in other words, through our holiness as the *cause* of its reign, is sound speech, which cannot be blamed. The reader may judge of this for himself.

I expressed my dislike of Mr. Baine's assertion, 'That it belongs to Christ's royal power, as the head of his church, or sacred society, to prescribe the terms of salvation.'—This is calculated to bewilder numbers. I observed also, that the terms of salvation were prescribed to the Saviour in the council of peace, and fulfilled by him from the sordid manger to the ignominious tree. Here our author charges me with using the reprobated phrase, because I speak of *TERMS OF SALVATION prescribed to the REDEEMER*. But with your leave, Sir, or

without it, it is plain to a school-boy, that I express my dislike at *TERMS OF SALVATION prescribed unto, and to be performed by GUILTY MEN.* If I should express my dislike of ascribing merit to guilty men, who offend in all things, would I be chargeable with the reprobated phrase, should I ascribe merit unto the blessed Redeemer? Your reasoning is always conclusive!

He informs me, that I must study the English language with greater accuracy, before I can furnish a better phraseology. Had he asserted, before I can furnish a *worse*, the reply had been more difficult. According to my scanty knowledge of the language, the word *term* or *terms*, when applied to the receiving and enjoying any benefit, generally signifies the *condition* on which our *right* to receive and enjoy is founded. This is the usual acceptation of it: And to tell guilty sinners, that *faith, repentance, &c.* are the *TERMS* of salvation, is to tell them, in other words, that these are the *CONDITION* on which their *right* to the blessings of salvation is founded. It is probable that Baillie's account of the word, namely, *condition* or *stipulation*, will be disregarded; he is too obscure: our author may consult the Pensioner's unliftable dictionary, where he will find, that the signification of the word is the same.

You observe, Sir, that Seceders disapprove of *faith's conditionality*; and it is true they do so: but the explication given by our Westminster divines, that *faith* is the *mean, hand, or instrument* which receives, is a far better phraseology than *terms of salvation*. And a *FREE* salvation, yet *loaded* with *conditions* innumerable, every grace, every duty a condition, every blessing which is any how connected with another blessing, on that account the *condition* of it: this is not the doctrine of our Confession, but a medley of inconsistency. — It is somewhat mysterious, that this should have been maintained lately by some, who profess a high regard for our Westminster Confession.

That the reader may know distinctly what I dislike in this particular, he must understand, that those who insist on *terms* of salvation prescribed unto, and to be performed by guilty sinners; it is usually *faith, repentance, and sincere obedience*, which constitute these *TERMS* of salvation, or *CONDITIONS* upon



which the sinner's right to receive the blessing is founded; a doctrine which every Calvinist, who knows his own principles, will abhor. It is not merely the Relief which I have in my eye, as my friend asserts; these are expressions perhaps more common with some others, than the Relief: Mr. Hutchison, however, defends the ensnaring expression, and is very certain, that I cannot invent a better phraseology.

I observed, that it was certainly an undesigned oversight in Mr. Baine, to explain Col. i. 19. 'For it pleased *the Father*, that 'in him should all fulness dwell;' as including the Redeemer's *essential* fulness; it overturns his supreme Deity, and self-existence, by making his essential fulness a fruit of the Father's pleasure. It is no oversight, however, with Mr. Hutchison; and his defence so pitiful, that he has no claim to a serious answer: but the solemnity of the subject forbids one of a different kind. He replies; 'But, Sir, is not the Father *pleased* that the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ?' But, Sir, is this the apostle's expression? Can any man be so blind, as not perceive your mangling the words of the Holy Ghost? That the Father IS PLEASED, that it DOES DWELL in Christ, is your assertion, and may be expressive of pleasure in it. But the apostle does not assert, that the Father IS PLEASED, that IT DOES DWELL in him; which may be expressive of *pleasure in it*; But, he asserts, IT PLEASED the Father, that IT SHOULD DWELL in him, which is as evidently expressive of its being *a fruit* of the Father's pleasure.—You should study the English language more accurately, before you venture to quibble, in opposition to the general opinion of orthodox divines, on such a momentous point of doctrine.

Besides, Sir, the original expression puts it beyond question, that it is mentioned as *a fruit* of the Father's pleasure. It would be just as literally rendered, it SEEMED GOOD to the Father, that all fulness SHOULD *dwell* in him. You may find the very same expression rendered *it seemed good*, ROM. xv. 26. And if ever it has a different signification, the words are in a quite different contexture. It would be no loss to you, to be rather better acquainted with the original.

To make short work, the reader must understand, that Mr. Hutchison maintains, that Col. ii. 19. 'It pleased *the*

' *Father*, that in him *should* all fulness dwell,' includes Christ's *essential* fulness; that such an exposition of it is sound and good. The translation is plain, that, be the fulness what it will, it is a FRUIT of the Father's pleasure; the original leaves no room to doubt of it; nor can he mention a sound expositor who ever understood it in a different sense. If this vindication is sound, the Redeemer's essential fulness is a fruit of the Father's pleasure, and he is not the self-existent God.—If my friend is an avowed Arian, he talks consistent with himself; if he is not, how wretched his cause, when he must vent the very soul of Arianism in order to defend it? You make yourself very merry, Sir, on this particular; but your silly jesting, concerning a most momentous article of the Christian faith, is truly detestable. How was your mind impressed with a sense of the Redeemer's supreme Deity, when you could talk like a buffoon, in your arguing concerning it?

The penitent's right to sue for pardon, I connected with a former particular, as Mr. Hutchison's reply is become quite stale. I observed, that Mr. Baine is quite ambiguous, with respect to the godly exercising unbelieving legal fear; our author gives a tolerable account of it, but whether it is Mr. Baine's meaning or not, is as uncertain as ever.

Mr. Baine likewise asserts, 'The purpose which cleaves to the Lord, is proof against seduction.' This, I observed, ascribes by far too much to the purposes of the creature; and that it is God's purpose, Christ's purchase, &c. which preserve the godly from seduction. He replies; 'That these things consist well together;' and, that 'built on such a bottom, the pious resolutions of good men, are proof against final apostacy.' I answer, It is sound doctrine then with Mr. Hutchison, to ascribe that to our purposes, which is true *only* of the bottom on which they are built. According to this defence, there can be no harm in asserting, that our purposes entitle us unto the heavenly glory. If they are evangelical, they are bottomed on a Redeemer's merit, which entitles to eternal bliss; and our purposes, and the Redeemer's merit consist well together: As his merit ALONE entitles to heaven; so it is our reasonable service to *resolve* to improve it as our

plea for grace to preserve from apostacy. Nor is it true, as he asserts, that the pious resolutions of good men, are proof against final apostacy; the blossom of their best resolutions frequently goes up like the dust; and it is not their resolutions, but an invisible hand supporting them, which preserves them from total and final seduction. Whatever share our author's purposes may have of the work, he means that they should have a decent share of the praise.—Away, Sir, with such legal pride, ascribing, that to your feeble purposes, which is due to free and sovereign grace alone; proud nature has no occasion for such excitements.

My friend does not attempt to vindicate Mr. Baine, from the charge of inconsistency, in representing presbyterian government and discipline, as a capital mean of divine institution in one page; but a mere circumstantial, less important matter in the next; but proceeds to defend one of his principal arguments for loose terms of admission. 'Nor can faction or party spirit give a good reason, why imperfection in knowledge should impede this communion, when deficiency in point of holiness has not the same effect.' It is the sum of this argument, that *defects in holiness*, and *defects in knowledge*, must have the *same effect* with respect unto *admission to, or exclusion from* the seals of the new covenant: And as *every* defect in holiness ought not to exclude, so neither ought *every* defect in knowledge. I know of none who maintain, that every defect in either of these, ought to exclude from sealing ordinances.

I observed, however, that defects in holiness *allowed of, persisted in*, yea, maintained to be *just, and scriptural*, ought most certainly to exclude from sealing ordinances; and therefore, according to our author's own argument, defects in knowledge *allowed of, persisted in*, maintained to be *just and scriptural*, must certainly exclude from sealing ordinances also. But this is evidently the case with Episcopalian, and others, with respect to church government; they *allow of, they persist in*, they maintain, that their notions are *just and scriptural*. Now, as *defects in holiness, of this kind*, must exclude, so according to our author's argument, their *defects in knowledge of the same kind*, must certainly exclude them also. This is



so obvious to every one, that my friend can make no reply, but is obliged, as usual, to have recourse to evasion. ‘ But this, says he, is an unfair representation of the case. – What man, or society of men will plead, that ignorance is *just* and *scriptural*.’ Not so fast, Sir, this is only a quibble; for, if you please to recollect yourself, my words are, *what you call ignorance*. Do you imagine, that Episcopalians will maintain nothing to be *just* or *scriptural*, which Presbyterians *call ignorance*? Nor can you write a few sentences, till you give the same representation. ‘ Episcopal, and Independents, say you, labour under a mistake about their peculiar forms of government.’ I may reply in your own words, this is an unfair representation of the case. What man, or society of men will maintain, that a *mistake* is *just* and *scriptural*? But Episcopal, and others, will maintain, that what you call a *mistake* about capital means of divine institution, is *just* and *scriptural*. Your mistake is little better than ignorance.—Besides, I always thought that a mistake included ignorance, unless it be what some have stiled, a *wilful mistake*, which does not render it less criminal. Your judicious observation on *ignorance*, and immediately substituting *mistake* in its place, is only an evidence, that something you must say, but you know not what. Perhaps you spurn at *ignorance*, as a term quite too *rude* for the *supremacy* and *hierarchy*; but let us now substitute *mistake* in the place of *ignorance*, and try what support it affords to your decisive argument. Let us suppose then, that one applies to Mr. Hutchison for admission, and addresses him to this purpose; I am deficient in a variety of particulars, *which you call* branches of holiness; but I *allow*, I *approve*, and maintain, that what you call *defects* in holiness, is *just* and *scriptural*; and am resolved as yet to *persist*; he would most certainly be excluded. Well, suppose an Episcopal applies to him for admission, if he is candid, he would address him *thus*: You maintain, that I am labouring under a *mistake*, about what you reckon *capital means of divine institution*, which must be no trivial matter in your view. But I *allow*, I *approve* of what you call a *mistake*, I maintain, that it is *just* and *scriptural*; I approve of the *supremacy*, and *hierarchy*, and am resolved to *persist* in opposing your capital means as

*unscriptural*. Now, if defects in *holiness*, and *knowledge*, have the *same effect*. it is clear as broad day, that his Episcopal's *mistake* must unquestionably exclude him, and my friend's judicious criticism on ignorance affords no support to his ruined argument.

From what I have now observed, it is plain to a demonstration, that if imperfection in holiness *allowed of*, and *persisted in*, ought to exclude from sealing ordinances; his Episcopal's imperfection in knowledge, his *ignorance*, his *mistake*, call it what you will, since it is *allowed of*, and *persisted in*, must of necessity exclude him; or the effects of partial knowledge, and partial holiness cannot be the same.

Besides, our author's argument is not only calculated to smooth the wrinkled brow of *error*; it casts a very favourable eye on *immorality* also. According to his doctrine, imperfection in knowledge, which constitutes *error*, *gross error*, a *direct breach* of the second commandment, does not exclude from sealing ordinances. This is asserted in the most positive manner, in his celebrated paraphrase. Now, if according to his argument, imperfection in *knowledge* and *holiness*, must have the same effect; it is the *natural, obvious, and undeniable* consequence, that imperfection in holiness, which constitutes *immorality*, *gross immorality*, a *direct breach* of the moral law, must not exclude; otherwise the effect of *partial knowledge*, and *partial holiness*, cannot be same. Nor can we exercise discipline for these imperfections in holiness, which constitute gross immorality; for, if they ought not to exclude from sealing ordinances, they cannot expose to censure.

But finding himself unable to support his argument, in his usual manner, he has recourse to assertion, and then he is never at a loss. 'If a man err only in things which consist with the power of godliness, says he, partial ignorance will not, on scriptural grounds, exclude from sealing ordinances, more than partial holiness.' The reader must give him implicit faith for this; a proof was troublesome. By the *power* of godliness, I suppose, he means the *reality* of it; for, although there may be a *form* without the *power*, there cannot be the reality without the *power*, in less or greater measure. Accordingly, this is just his *visible saintship*, in other words. 'If a

‘ man err not in such things, as evidence him to be a stranger to the reality of godliness, he must not be excluded.’ But for this, the reader has only our author’s assertion. Your terms of communion, Sir, are just as *vague* and *indeterminate* as ever. I ask, what is that *partial* knowledge and holiness, which ought to exclude? You will allow, that there may be such partial knowledge and holiness as ought to exclude, and expose to the censures of the house of God. But according to your paraphrase, partial knowledge which constitutes *error*, *gross error*, must not exclude: of consequence, according to your Achillean argument, partial holiness, which constitutes *immorality*, *gross immorality*, must not exclude. An excellent two-leav’d gate for promiscuous admission. Will you never be explicite with respect to your terms of admission, that we may judge if they are scriptural or not; but always huddle them up in ambiguity?

On this particular, I find a very heavy charge exhibited, because I asserted, that party spirit is carried as high in the Relief, as in any other denomination. He replies; ‘ But, Sir, though Mr. Neil had been of the same sentiments you mention; is it fair to charge his surviving Brethren with them?’ But, Sir, where have I done so? I only said, that this was done *in the Relief*; was not Mr. Neil in the Relief? My assertion, like Mr. Baine’s doctrine, is certainly true. He adds, ‘ That I have proven that Mr. Neil’s sentiments are chargeable on me, for I have read his sermons.’ I cannot assert, that you *now* publish a *moral* falshood: You know it was a saying of a Scotch judge, that a man may repeat a lie, till he is convinced himself that it is truth. I have answered this already in its place, to which I refer the reader, and leave him to his own meditation concerning your veracity.

Mr. Baine asserts, p. 280. That Christ’s testament was made ‘ in behalf of those who were given him out of the world.’—Here he confounds the making of Christ’s testament, with the making of the covenant of grace. Our author has no reply, except his trite one. ‘ If Christ’s testament, says he, was made in behalf of all who hear the gospel, it was in behalf of those who were given him out of the world;—and therefore Mr. Baine’s doctrine is good.’ I ask, Does Mr. Baine’s expres-



sion bear, that it was made in behalf of all who hear the gospel or the reverse? It is the obvious import of Mr. Hutchison's defence, that it is *good doctrine* to conceal one half of the countenance of God.

In the same page it is asserted, that these who were given to Christ out of the world; 'If we consider them as described in the gospel revelation, and qualified for the blessings promised there, they are believers in Christ, his willing and holy people.' On this I observed, that faith, or believing, is promised blessing; and therefore according to this doctrine, the elect must believe, in order to qualify themselves for believing. Mr. Hutchison replies, 'Mr. Baine refers to the promises of eternal life in heaven, in this passage; and faith and holiness are excellent preparations for it, if the word of God be true. I am very certain, that the word of God is true; but I am equally certain, there is no such reference in the passage; and therefore not one word of this apology is true. The words themselves are a plain contradiction to our author's assertion. It is the blessings *promised in the gospel revelation*. Is it only the blessings of glory that are promised in the gospel? It is plain as broad day, that Mr. Baine refers to the blessings of *grace* as well as glory. In the preceding particular, it is all the blessings which Christ *merited by his death*. In the passage under consideration, it is the blessings *promised in the gospel revelation*. In the following particular, it is *all that is promised in the book of God*. Where are we to find this reference of yours? To assert a downright fiction, and with a sneer too, is masterly!

I expressed my dislike of Mr. Baine's assertion, that the death of Christ 'renders the Deity placable.' And observed, that 'scripture assures us, that he is really appeased, or reconciled; 'The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake.' He replies, very true, he is so;—he is well-pleased with what the 'Surety has done and suffered in their stead.'—But the gracious declaration runs, that he is well pleased *for*, or, *on account* of what Christ has done; intimating, that he is well pleased with sinners. He likewise asks if I can prove, 'that he is actually reconciled to the elect themselves, till they believe in his Son.' And adds, 'Art thou a teacher in Israel, &c.'

is if this were exceedingly plain.—I can prove nothing concerning *actual* reconciliation, till you explain yourself. I am certain, that the elect *on their part*, are not reconciled unto God, till they believe on his Son: But God being reconciled to them, is a different matter. The scripture assures us, that Christ has made reconciliation for sin, Dan. ix. 24. Heb. i. 17. Now, a gracious God, providing a Surety from eternity, is an abundant evidence, that he is *placable* in himself: But having received satisfaction from the Surety, he is not merely *placable*, but he is *appeased*, he is *reconciled*, he is in Christ *reconciling* the world to himself, 2-Cor. v. 19.

But as you manage this particular in the way of question, allow me to put the following in my turn. 1. Did the reconciliation made by the death of Christ, *only* render the Deity *placable*; but did not *appease*, or reconcile him? And must our *believing* make up the *imperfections* of that reconciliation made by the death of Christ? 2. Can you prove, that the Deity is not truly *legally* reconciled unto the elect by the death of Christ? 3. Can you prove, that the Deity may not be truly legally reconciled to the elect, antecedent to what you call *actual* reconciliation, be what it will? 4. Nay, can you prove, that he may be *legally*, but not *actually* reconciled? 5. Can you prove, that there can be no true legal reconciliation to the elect, prior to a judicial *declaration* of it, and *application* of it to the consciences of individuals in believing? 6. If we attend to the scripture sense of *reconciliation* when applied unto God, it is something different, I apprehend, from *complacency* in the sinner as a believer. If I can guess what you mean by *actual* reconciliation; you confound *reconciliation to*, and *complacency in* the sinner as a believer. I therefore ask if you can prove, that there can be no *true legal* reconciliation unto the elect *as such*, antecedent to complacency in them *as believers*? Once more, if there can be no true legal reconciliation prior to believing, must not all the troubles of the godly, antecedent to faith, be branches of the curse, inflicted by God as an *irreconciled* judge? But how can the curse, or any branch of it, be inflicted on the elect, when Christ has completely exhausted it as their Surety?—Till you state the difference between *legal* and *actual* reconciliation;

and prove that *reconciliation to*, and *complacency in*, are synonymous terms in scripture language; and give a satisfying answer to the queries proposed; I must conclude, that intricate points of doctrine may appear very obvious to some, because they are destitute of intellectuals to discern the difficulty. *Art thou a teacher, &c.*

The reader must understand, that the death of Christ rendering the Deity *placable*, is sterling coin, a standard phrase with Arminians, and expressive of the very soul of their scheme. It imports, that the death of Christ has *only* rendered the Deity *reconcilable*, or that he *may* be reconciled; and that it is our faith and repentance, &c. which must reconcile him. If this doctrine of Arminians, which Mr. Hutchison so strenuously defends, is true; the death of Christ is not a *perfect satisfaction*, and our faith and repentance must effectuate that for us, in the eye of a *placable* God, which the death of his only begotten Son could not accomplish; and a decent share of reconciliation-work attributed to ourselves.

In opposition unto this, it is the doctrine of Calvinists; that God having received compleat satisfaction to his law and justice from his own Son, as the substitute Surety of these who were given unto him; he is not merely *placable*, but he is *appeased*, he is *reconciled*, he is *well-pleased* through the righteousness of his only begotten Son; and the duty of ministers to proclaim, *not only* that he is *placable*, but that he is *appeased*, *reconciled*, that he is in Christ *reconciling* the world unto himself. And as it is a secret which God has reserved to himself, who they are who were given unto his Son, until the day declare it; it is the duty of ministers to proclaim unto all without exception, that God is reconciled through the death of his Son, that he is well-pleased, that he has received *compleat satisfaction*; and that they have an undoubted right to apply to him, not merely as a God *placable*, and who *may* be reconciled by their faith and repentance, but as a reconciled God and Father in Christ Jesus; to give faith and repentance.

I have been too tedious on this particular, but it is a most momentous article of the doctrines of free grace which my opponent attempts to overthrow, and deserves a volume, instead of a few pages, in its vindication. And if my friend expected



to get off with his superficial flourish on such an interesting branch of doctrine, he was a little mistaken. According to his vindication, a Relief minister may use the standard-phrases of Arminians, as much as he will, although they rob the Saviour of the glory of reconciliation-work, and are well calculated to ensnare: If he can wrangle out some strained unnatural sense of them, it is sound speech which cannot be blamed. Like the rest of his evasions, it is just a proclamation of protection to the ensnaring phrases of heretics, till the times are so favourable, that they may walk abroad and deceive the nations, without any passport from their PROTECTOR.

I have now considered his defence of the expressions censured: It consists principally of evasions, sentences mangled and tortured, till they confess as he pleases; a strenuous vindication of the dialect of heretics; now a Baxterian, next an Arminian, and even an Arian tenet necessary to embellish the defence. All this is quite orthodox with Mr. Hutchison. The reasoning of the Abiezrite with the men of his city may justly be applied to the most part of my opponent's defence. 'Will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him? If he be a god let him plead for himself.' Will you plead, Sir, for Baxterians, Arminians, Arians? Will you protect their ensnaring expressions? Perhaps they will not applaud you, as it is probable they will imagine, that they can defend their tenets themselves, to much better purpose.

#### S E C T. VIII.

##### *Mr. Hutchison's Charge of gross Error considered.*

OUR author now proceeds to correct my *rudness, incivility, abuse, and illiberality*; by charging me with a number of *errors, real* and of a very *dangerous* nature and tendency. But he only displays his own ignorance, good man, and exposes himself to a little more *needful* correction; for in charging me with *ten*, he has vented *triple* that number. He informs his reader, that he is not to follow my *worthless example*, in *fabricating* errors where there are none. Had it not

been for conscious guilt, an introduction of this sort would have been spared, and the reader left to judge for himself.

His first charge of gross error is founded on my asserting, That *the ceremonial law did not require moral duties*. ‘ This, says he, is directly contrary to the Confession of Faith, which teacheth, Chap. xix. sect. 3. That the ceremonial law holdeth forth divers instructions in moral duties.’—I reply: To *hold forth* divers instructions of moral duties is one thing; and to *require* the duties themselves, with the *authority* of a law, is another, and very different thing. The ant *holds forth* divers instructions to Mr. Hutchison of moral duties. Is it become a law to you, Sir, authoritatively requiring the discharge of a variety of moral duties? Neither does our Confession assert, that the ceremonial law required moral duties, but only afforded instruction concerning them. The ceremonial law required a variety of rites in the cleansing of lepers; these *held forth* a variety of instructions of moral duties: but the ceremonial law required only the ritual part, the moral law required the moral duties. An ordinary genius may *hunt* heresy, or *vend* it; but my friend can display his dexterity in *heresy hunting*, and *vending* at *once*, and palm it on the Confession, while it asserts no such thing. Our Westminster divines had, at least, a moderate share of common sense, Sir: you should never drag them in to countenance your absurdities. He adds,

It is contrary also to scripture, Gal. v. 3. ‘ For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.’—He is prudent enough to pass this text without any explication, because he grievously perverts it: He adduces it as a proof, that the ceremonial law required moral duties. I desire the reader to observe, that in this passage the apostle is evidently speaking to professed Christians; and therefore, if this passage respects the requirements of the ceremonial law, as our author maintains; it is not only what it required under the Jewish dispensation, but what it required of Christians in the apostle’s days. I shall show the reader the obvious meaning of the passage in a few words. A number of these Galatians had imbibed the legal notion, that their ceremonial services, and moral duties, were to be connected with

what Christ had done, in order to constitute their justifying righteousness. The apostle therefore assures them, that if they would perform one branch of a justifying righteousness, they behoved to perform the whole; for Christ would either furnish them with a *complete*, or *no* justifying righteousness. And as they observed circumcision as a branch of their justifying righteousness, they excluded themselves from any benefit by what Christ had done; and on this account, and not because the ceremonial law *requires* any thing of Christians, they behoved to work out a justifying righteousness, or obey the whole law. Agreeable to this, he declares to them in the following verse, ‘ Christ is become of none effect unto you, who-  
 ‘ soever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from  
 ‘ grace.’ Plainly implying, that it was their seeking to be justified by the law, which bound them to do the whole law; of the same import with verse 21. of the preceding chapter, ‘ Tell me, ye who desire to be under the law, do ye not hear  
 ‘ the law?’ If ye will have recourse to the law, ye must hear, or do whatever it requires.— From this short hint, it is obvious, that the passage has no connection with the ceremonial law requiring moral duties, but imports, that if men will have recourse to the law for righteousness, they must obey the law in perfection.

Having now briefly shown, that his charge is entirely groundless; it will not be improper, to turn the chase, and consider what errors he has vented, in attempting to support his charge. The interest of truth requires it. 1. He is chargeable with blending the ceremonial and moral law; whereas the ceremonial law required the ritual, the moral law required the moral duties. 2. He is chargeable with attempting to palm this error on our Confession, because it asserts, and very justly, that the ceremonial law held forth instructions *of*, or concerning moral duties. 3. With perverting the meaning of the Holy Ghost, by quoting Gal. v. 3. as a proof that circumcision required Christians to do the whole law: While the obvious meaning is, that if they would be justified *by*, they behoved to do the whole law. 4. With perverting the end and design of an ordinance of God. Circumcision under the *Old*, like baptism under the *New Testament*, was a seal of ingrafting



into Christ; and included an engagement on the sinner's part to be the Lord's, or in the strength of promised grace, to perform every moral duty. But the seals of God's covenant do not formally require any duty, but our receiving, includes an engagement on our part; but still it is the moral law which requires every moral duty. It is the native consequence of our author's argument, that circumcision, an Old-Testament seal of the covenant, required of Christians, the performance of every moral duty. According to his argument, our divines were guilty of a palpable omission in their Catechisms. After what is baptism? They ought to have inserted another, *viz.* What moral duties does baptism require of us? Its requirements are certainly as extensive, as the requirements of circumcision. Here we have the design of an ordinance of God entirely perverted. 5. In his celebrated paraphrase, he maintains, that to observe any part of the ceremonial law, as a branch of God's worship, after the death of Christ, was error, gross error, a direct breach of the second command. Here he maintains, that these Galatians, observing circumcision in this manner, a branch of the ceremonies, bound them to do the whole law. Agreeable to his own assertion, he maintains, that error, gross error, a breach of the second command bound these Galatians to do the whole law. You have now completed half a decade of errors in support of your first charge. Your new-obligation brethren, as you discreetly stile them, will certainly congratulate you, Sir: you maintain, that at the death of Christ, the ceremonial law was divested of the authority of the law-giver; but, that a number of years after, when it was only an idolatrous rite, it required perfect obedience at the hand of the primitive Christians. This is a source of obligation *truly new*.

His second charge of grievous error is founded on my asserting, 'If there are moral duties which the light of nature cannot discover, and the Heathen destitute of any particular revelation of them, it will not be alledged that such duties are binding on them:—they cannot be binding on them.' By these duties which the light of nature cannot discover, I mean such moral duties, as are the result of a gospel revelation: Such as, *to believe the gospel report; to receive a gifted Christ;*

to worship God through a Mediator; to bewail our remaining unbelief; to renounce our own righteousness, &c. Such duties being the result of gospel revelation, and not discoverable by the light, or law of nature, I asserted, and do still assert, that they are not binding on the Heathen; accordingly they will not be condemned, nor punished for the non-performance of them. This is evident from that expression of the apostle, Rom. ii. 12. 'As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.' Where the apostle teacheth us, that as Jews and Christians, who have been privileged with revelation, will be judged by the written law which they enjoyed; so the Heathen nations will be judged by the law or light of nature which they enjoyed, and punished for their transgressing it. This, as far as I know, is the uniform doctrine of all the Protestant churches. When our author condemns the above doctrine as dreadfully erroneous, he must be supposed to maintain, that the Heathen are bound to believe the gospel report, although they never heard it; bound to receive the Saviour although he was never offered to them, &c. These are moral duties, binding on those who are privileged with the gospel revelation; and therefore, according to his argument, must be binding on the Heathens also: a doctrine, in my view, plainly antisciptural, and big with absurdities. To which of the orthodox divines will our author turn to support him in this opinion? How absurd to suppose, that the moral law should bind the Heathens to believe: and that they will be condemned hereafter, for not believing that which was never revealed to them, neither in their federal head, nor in their own persons! Certainly there can be no warrantable receiving without a prior giving; a man can receive nothing unless it be given him of God: but Christ is not given to the Heathen who never heard the gospel.

These, and other moral duties, which are the result of enjoying the gospel revelation, and binding on Christians; being undiscoversable by the law or light of nature, I still maintain that they neither are, nor can be binding on the Heathens.—But let us now hear what our author advances in support of his charge.

1. He objects, that 'according to this excellent doctrine,

‘ if the Heathen cannot discover by the light of nature, that they are under the covenant of works, which they cannot, therefore they are not under that covenant.’ My assertion was this; that these moral duties, which the light of nature could not discover, were not binding upon the Heathens. I cannot therefore understand what connexion this objection has with the point in hand, except our author maintain, that the covenant of works is a moral duty, or that it is a moral duty to be under the covenant of works. It is true, the covenant of works required of Adam perfect obedience; but to make the covenant of works itself a moral duty, or a moral duty to be under it, appears to me a very uncouth phraseology. If he will make the covenant of works a duty, at any rate it is not a moral one, for it was positive, not flowing from the nature, but from the will of God.

2. He objects, that ‘ this is making the knowledge of the Heathen, the extent of moral duty to them;—so that the more stupidly ignorant the Heathen are, and the less capable to discover moral duties, the fewer of them are they obliged to perform.’ This, Sir, by no means follows from my assertion, except you make the light or law of nature, and the Heathens knowledge of it, the same thing, which are certainly very different. As there is a very great difference between the written law which Christians enjoy, and their knowledge of it; so also, there is a great difference betwixt the law of nature which the Heathen are under, and their knowledge of it. I asserted nothing, concerning the knowledge of Heathens, or what they do in fact discover by the light of nature; many of them through their stupidity, prejudices, and want of attention, discover but very little of what they might know. My assertion plainly respects what the light or law of nature discovers, whether they attend to it or not. Your random charges have not the shadow of a foundation in any thing I have asserted, which may be plain to a child, from the following consideration. Should I assert, that the light of divine revelation is the extent of moral duty to Christians; as well might you charge me with maintaining, that their *knowledge* of it was the *extent* of duty to them; and that the more brutishly ignorant they are, the fewer duties they are bound to perform: Can any thing be more absurd!



You mention Paul as an old-fashioned divine, opposing my doctrine. But it was a misunderstanding of Paul's doctrine, which led me into the mistake, if you could prove that it is one. The reader may consult Rom. i. from the 18th verse; where the apostle speaking of the wrath of God revealed against the Heathens, founds it entirely on these things which the light or law of nature discovers. He declares, chap. ii. 12. that the Heathen will be judged by the law of nature; and do you apprehend, that they will be judged by the law of nature, but condemned, and punished for these things which it neither does nor can discover? How absurd!—And yet it must be the case, if these things which the law or light of nature cannot discover are binding on them. These passages of the apostle contain the very substance of what I asserted; I am apprehensive, you mean to send the old-fashioned divine a-packing for an heretic.

On this particular our author delivers doctrine something uncommon. 'Such are the obvious consequences, says he, of making the *ability* of Heathens to discover moral duty, the *extent* of moral obligation, and not the infinite perfection of the divine nature, which Paul and other old divines were wont to make the measure and extent of moral duty.' The *ability of Heathens to discover*, Sir, is your own assertion, not mine; your obvious consequences are perhaps connected with your own assertions, not with mine; You fight with your own shadow. But what do you mean, by the *infinite perfection of the divine nature* being the *measure and extent* of moral duty? Had you any determinate idea fixed to these words when you wrote them? The perfections of God, you acknowledge, are infinite; is the extent of moral duty infinite, since divine perfections are the extent of it? It will be allowed, I suppose, that the obedience of the saints triumphant perfectly corresponds to the extent of moral duty; but according to your reasoning, their obedience must either be *imperfect*, or it must be *infinite*, since the *extent of moral duty* is *infinite*. You may chuse which of these you please. Such is the obvious consequence of this assertion. The infinite perfections of God, are the ground and reason why every rational creature is bound to obey him; but the law of God is as evidently the measure of that obedience.

The *infinite perfection* of the divine nature, the *extent* of

moral duty, is an uncouth phraseology; and it would be exceedingly kind, would you point out so much as a single instance of its being adopted by Paul, or old-fashioned divines. But a proof of assertions is troublesome.

You quote the Confession of Faith at large, declaring, that the covenant of works binds all men to *entire exact* obedience. But this gives you no assistance, unless the Westminster divines maintain, that in order to render the obedience of Heathens exact, it is indispensibly requisite, that they should perform a variety of duties, which the law or light of nature does not discover; yea, that they should perform every moral duty which the written word requires of Christians. It is quite idle to make a noise about a trifle; but are you really serious, or only jesting with your reader, when you assert, that the Westminster divines were so *stupidly ignorant* as to maintain, that the covenant of works binds the Heathen to believe on Christ, although they never heard of him? If this is true, it must bind them to that which they have no right to do: for sinners RIGHT to receive Christ is founded upon his being GIVEN unto them in the word; but he is not given unto them in the word or gospel, till they are privileged with it.

It is now time to consider what errors my opponent has vented in supporting his second charge.

1. He expressly maintains, that the Heathen are bound to perform every moral duty contained in the written word, and punishable for non-performance; in direct opposition unto the apostle's doctrine, that they shall perish without the law, or written word, Rom. ii. 12. He likewise represents the Most High as acting an inconsistent part, in judging Heathens by the law of nature, but punishing them for ever, for the non-performance of these duties which the law, by which they are judged, neither revealed nor required.

2. He maintains, that the *infinite perfection* of the divine nature, is the *extent* of moral duty; of consequence, that the *extent* of moral duty is *infinite*: And the obedience of glorified saints, either infinite, or imperfect.

I shall only observe, and have done with this particular, that if the reader would understand our author's chimerical notion of the extent of moral obligation, he may consult p. 118.

where he asserts, That ' the child born into the world, is as ' *perfectly* under the obligations of the law, as the man of ' gray hairs.' The *reality* of obligation is questioned by none ; and therefore he must mean the *extent* of it, or he is quite beside the question. Now, if the new-born child is *as extensively* under the law's obligation, the child of a day old, is bound to read, hear, pray, praise, to hearken to the instructions of parents, reverence and obey them. And as the duties of children and parents to one another are mutual, he is bound to instruct, and correct his new-born child in case of irreverence, or non-attention to his instructions. Can any thing well be more absurd ? And if the day after, why not the day before the birth, the child is a rational creature, and a subject of the moral law, in the one case as well as the other ? But I refrain from the derision, which your notion justly deserves. Besides, how can much be required of them to whom much is given, if according to your doctrine, the *extent* of moral duty is infinite to all ? Our author, in a former publication, laid it down as a general rule for the interpretation of prophecies, that if one clause of a verse is to be understood literally, the next clause must, by no means, be understood figuratively. I expressed my dislike of this learned rule ; and his

Third charge of error is founded on my quoting Isa. ii. 3. in opposition to his judicious rule of interpretation ; where the first clause is evidently *figurative*, and the next, ' he will ' TEACH US of his ways' is as evidently *literal*. My friend makes himself very merry with this, and affirms, in the most confident manner, that the words, ' he will TEACH US of his ' ways,' are to be understood figuratively ; and that to understand them literally, ascribes a bodily form to the Most High. Here it is plain as broad day, he strikes out *divine teaching* from the inventory of the church's privileges ; it is a mere *figurative something*, no man knows what. If it is said, he did not mean to establish such doctrine, I hope, *in charity*, he did not. But it is the obvious and unavoidable consequence of his doctrine, as he confidently maintains, that the words, *He will TEACH US of his ways*, are to be understood figuratively. A man teaches *as literally* by written, as by verbal instructions, and the Most High has frequently taught his church by both



the one and the other. But if he allows, that the words, *he will teach us*, are to be understood literally, no more is necessary to support my assertion. If he only means, that *ways* and *paths* are to be understood figuratively, where then his excellent rule of interpretation? Not only is one *clause* understood literally, and the next figuratively; but one *branch* of a clause *literally* and the next *branch figuratively*. Judicious deviser of general rules!—But even allowing him to pick out *two words* instead of the clause, his confident assertion, that to understand them literally, ascribes a bodily form to the Most High, bewrays only childish inattention (to call it no worse) to the import of scripture language. By the *Lord's ways*, we are sometimes to understand, the ways in which he is said to walk in his providence, ‘Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters,’ and the words are evidently figurative. But as generally we are to understand, the ways and paths which he prescribes to his people to walk in, ‘Teach me thy ways, and then will I walk in thy paths.’ And they are stiled *his ways*, because he prescribes them unto his people; and approves of them. But it is evident to a demonstration, that this last is the sense of the passage in question, ‘*We will walk*,’ not so much as the appearance of ascribing walking to the Most High. Now, after all your *reverend, judicious drollery*, for which you are so justly celebrated in every corner of the Relief, will you be so kind as to show us the connection, between the Most High prescribing ways to his people to walk in, on account of which, they are stiled *his ways*, and being himself possessed of a bodily form. Your obvious unavoidable consequence, fair deduction, is evidently a reverie of your own imagination, for not a single syllable in the passage concerning the Most High walking, but his people; *We will walk*. Are you capable, Sir, of blushing at ignorance detected?

Allowing you, to pick out a word or two, instead of the sentence, and torture and wrest the meaning of my expressions; you can only infer from them, that the soul walks in paths as the body does. And quietly between ourselves, Sir, your remarks on this passage, would tempt one to think, that some souls are compounded of matter, not very much sublimated, and little impropriety in ascribing walking unto them in the

literal sense. On this particular, my opponent is chargeable,  
 1. With the gross error of denying divine teaching, asserting in the most confident manner, that the words, ' he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths,' are a mere figurative expression. 2. With maintaining, that the Most High cannot prescribe ways to his people, without a bodily form.

His fourth charge of error is founded on my asserting, that if our Redeemer had no call in providence to occasional duties, of the first table ; there was no reason why he should perform either these, or relative duties of the second, which were not required of him in that station in which he was placed, or capacity in which he acted ; and his non-performance of them, no argument against their morality. On this my friend makes a hideous noise ; charges me with implety, blasphemy, destroying the perfection of the Redeemer's obedience, teaching doctrine as dishonourable to it, as ever any Arian or Socinian taught concerning his divinity. But all this is ignorant rant, or deceitful grimace. The non-performance of *occasional moral* duties, when there is no call in providence, can never render any righteousness whatever imperfect. Nothing can render a righteousness imperfect, but either the committing of what the law forbids, or omitting to perform what it requires. But the non-performance of occasional duties, when there is no call in providence, cannot be the first, it is not a *committing* of any thing ; neither can it be an *omitting* of what the law *requires*, for the law does not require occasional duties, without a call in providence. This is plain to *school-boy*.

He mentions the Westminster divines asserting, that Christ fulfilled the law *perfectly*. I maintain the same thing, Sir ; nor can you furnish your reader with any thing but exclamation, and groundless charges as a proof of the contrary. Your quotation from the Confession might be to your purpose, could you inform us, where our Westminster divines maintain, that it is necessary to perform occasional duties without a call in providence, in order to fulfil the law perfectly : Or, in other words, that it is necessary to set aside the law as our rule, in order to fulfil it perfectly. Unfortunately for you, the

Westminster divines have steered clear of such crude absurdities.

The reader will perhaps think it odd, that Mr. Hutchison should maintain the very same doctrine, for which he charges me with blasphemy and impiety. In p. 78. he allows, that there are moral duties of the first table, not merely *occasional*, such as, to repent of our own sins, which the Saviour *did not*, nor *could not* perform: Duties of the second, which it is impious to mention concerning him, and was impossible for him to perform them. But still the reader must take Mr. Hutchison's word for it, that he would not maintain such doctrine for the *whole world*. If I am chargeable with destroying the perfection of the Redeemer's righteousness, Mr. Hutchison goes hand in hand with me; when he charges me with blasphemy, he charges himself, as he maintains the very same doctrine.

If I overturn the whole plan of redemption by Christ, at one stroke, as you assert, because I maintain that there were moral duties which the Redeemer had no call to perform; I ask you, Sir, what did the Saviour himself do, when he expressly refused to perform a moral duty, when urged to it? I mean the duty of the civil magistrate; 'Man, who made me a judge?' Will you maintain, that the Saviour, at one stroke, overturned the whole plan of redemption by himself? It is the obvious consequence of your assertion; but it is so dreadfully shocking, I refrain from urging it.—From what I have now mentioned, the reader may understand that Mr. Hutchison allows, that there are moral duties which the Saviour *did not*, *could not*, *impossible* for him to perform; but I am chargeable with grievous error, blasphemy, impiety, because I maintain the same doctrine.

As our author makes such a noise about maiming and destroying the perfection of the Redeemer's righteousness, it may not be improper to consider shortly, what is requisite to constitute a perfect righteousness; and the reader's attention is requested. In order to constitute a perfect righteousness, it is by no means requisite that a man should perform occasional duties without a call in providence, or that he should perform all the duties which are binding on these who occupy a different



station, or move in a sphere in which providence has not placed him. In proof of this I observe,

1. According to the tenor of the covenant of works, the first Adam, as the federal head of his natural offspring, was to obey the law in *perfection*. But this by no means included that he was to perform occasional duties without a call; for the law, neither as the law of nature, a covenant of works, or rule of life, requires occasional duties without a call in providence. Nor did it include, that he was to perform every particular duty, which might be incumbent on every individual of his posterity, in all the various stations, connexions, and office-capacities, in which providence might see meet to place them. He was not bound to perform the duties of a man or maid servant; nor the duties of a child to the natural parent, as he had none; the duties of a soldier to his general, as war was inconsistent with a state of perfection; nor the duties of an inferior of any kind, as he was placed at the head of his natural offspring. But in order to render his obedience perfect, it was necessary, that his holy soul should cheerfully approve of EVERY duty required by the holy law;—that he should perform, in *perfection*, every duty, which the law requires of every individual of the children of men, without exception;—that he should perform all these duties in *perfection*, which the law required of him, in that station in which providence had placed him. This would have rendered his obedience *perfect*, without the performance of occasional duties, when there was no call in providence; or duties which the law did not require of him in that capacity in which he acted. Agreeable to this, I observe,

2. According to the tenor of the covenant of grace, the Redeemer, as the spiritual head of his offspring, behoved to perform that very obedience in the performance of which the first Adam miscarried; to obey the law-precept in perfection, as well as endure the penalty. But in order to render his obedience to the precept every way perfect, it was by no means requisite, that he should perform occasional duties without a call in providence; it is vain to alledge it, for in such a case the law does not require them. My opponent allows, that repenting of our own sin, a moral duty of the first table, the Saviour did not, could not perform. I have mentioned public,

or national fasting, an occasional duty of the first table, but on account of the Saviour performing it. The consequence is obvious. It can be no impeachment of the perfection of the Redeemer's righteousness, or argument against the morality of an occasional duty, that we have no account of the Redeemer performing it. Nor was it requisite that he should perform every particular duty incumbent on every individual of his spiritual offspring, in all the various stations and connections, in which providence might see meet to place them. Agreeable to this we find him expressly refusing to discharge a moral duty when urged thereto: Luke xii. 'Man, who made me a judge? He did not act in the capacity of a *civil Judge*, but of a *public Teacher*; and therefore he declines the first, but immediately addresses himself to the last. It is probable, covetousness was at the bottom of the request; and therefore while he declined the office-work of the judge, as a public teacher, he gave a pointed exhortation against worldly mindedness; as the reader may see by consulting the passage.—It requires no common degree of effrontery, after this, to maintain that nothing can be a moral duty, if the Saviour did not perform it, when he expressly declined the discharge of a moral duty when urged to it. But in order to render the Redeemer's obedience unto the precept perfect, it was requisite, that his holy human nature should approve in the utmost *perfection* of every duty required by the holy law;—that he should perform, in all the *perfection* of the exceeding broad commandment, every duty which the holy law requires of every individual of the children of men, without exception;—that he should discharge, in *perfection*, every duty which the law required of him in that capacity in which he acted, as the federal head of his spiritual offspring. All this he performed in the utmost perfection, which constituted his righteousness every way perfect, suited unto the demands of the holy law, without the performance of occasional duties, when there was no call in providence, or duties which had no connection with that capacity in which he acted; for these the law requires not, in such circumstances. I observe,

3. Agreeable to all this, it is the duty of Christians, in the strength of promised grace, to approve cheerfully of every duty required by the holy law;—conscientiously to perform every

uty, which the law requires of *every* individual of the sons of men;—as also, every duty incumbent on them, in the various stations, connections, and capacities in which providence has placed them. Were all this done in perfection, which is incompetent to this imperfect state, it would constitute perfect obedience to the law as a rule of life, without the performance of occasional duties when there is no call in providence, or of these duties which have no connection with that situation in which providence has placed them. — From all this it is abundantly evident, that the performance of occasional duties, without a call in providence, or of these duties which have no connexion with that capacity in which the person acts, is no part of the perfection of any righteousness whatever. In such cases, the law does not require them; they can be no branch of perfect obedience thereto, and only vain babbling to talk of their naming, or rendering any righteousness whatever imperfect.

On this particular, my friend satisfies himself with assertions and exclamations; as argument entirely fails him, he does not so much as attempt it. ‘For my part, says he, I would not maintain this doctrine for the whole world.’ He expressly grants that there are duties of both tables, which the Saviour did not, could not, perform; but the reader must credit him that he would not for a world maintain this. ‘God forbid,’ says he, it should be true, or gain credit among the children of men.’ He grants it is true, but God forbid, says he, it should be true. Now, when Mr. Hutchison talks at this rate, *while he expressly grants that the doctrine I maintain is true*, he is certainly either *jesting*, or by solemn exclamations endeavouring to *impose* upon the unwary reader. Your seemingly devout and weighty asseverations, Sir, are nothing less than a vile profanation of the holy name of God, as you must either be in *jest*, or attempting to *impose*. Did your Brethren act a friendly part to you, they would certainly exercise the necessary discipline of the house of God, for a direct public violation of the third commandment. Can any man refrain from being grieved, to see a professed minister of Christ, profaning the holy name of God; either in the way of jesting, or which is more likely, by seemingly *solemn*, but *crafty grimace*, endeavouring to deceive the simple, as he finds that argument has utterly forsaken



him? You grant it is true, yet God forbid, say you, it should be true. How shocking!—It is now high time to consider what error he has vented in supporting this particular charge.

1. He maintains, that there may be imperfection of righteousness, consisting neither in *omission*, nor *commission*; for the non-performance of occasional duties, without a call in providence, is neither of these.

2. That with, or without a call, the Redeemer behoved to perform occasional duties; or do that which the law did not require of him, in order to obey the law in perfection.

3. That it overturns the whole plan of redemption at one stroke, to maintain, that there was a single moral duty which the Saviour did not perform; but he grants that there were moral duties of both tables, which the Redeemer *did* not, *could* not perform; and is evidently chargeable with the very thing he finds fault with in me.

4. What is still more shocking, it will deny for no man, that the Saviour himself expressly refused to perform a moral duty when urged to it. According to my friend's argument, this was to overturn the whole plan of redemption at one stroke. I chuse not to express the *obvious* and *unavoidable* conclusion more plainly. Such are the errors and absurdities, into which men are plunged by a blind and obstinate opposition to the truth.—I have only one advice to offer you, Sir, and am *serious*, whatever you may think of it. You have three or four Seceding clergymen in your neighbourhood, who understand much more distinctly than either you or I, what is requisite to constitute perfection of righteousness. Would you desire one or other of them, for some time, to spend a day with you weekly, or monthly, in order to give you a just and proper view of what is requisite to constitute a perfect righteousness, I am persuaded they are more generous, whatever ill-usage some of them have received; and are more concerned for propogating the truth, than to refuse. It would be an essential service to yourself, and to your congregation. It is a disgrace to the orthodox, to see one who professes to be of their number, express so much ignorance, of such a capital branch of their scheme, as the perfection of the surety righteousness of the divine Redeemer.

In p. 98. I am loaded with a fifth charge of grievous error, on account of my asserting, that to perform occasional duties, without a call in providence, is a work of supererogation. I know no reason for stating this as a distinct error from the former, except to complete his bewitching decade. I reply. To perform occasional duties, without a call in providence, is to do *more* than the law requires in *such circumstances*. This still appears to me exceedingly like supererogation. If my friend has devised a more polite fashionable expression, I have no objection, but wish to see the sentiment answered by him, or any for him. To instruct this charge, he adduces only a few of his former unsupported assertions, which I have already fully answered in their place, to which I refer the reader. He asks, Had the Saviour no call to covenanting, who came to fulfil the law *completely*. I reply: To perform occasional duties, without a call, is no branch of complete obedience to the law, but the very reverse. It is plainly to set aside the law as our rule, for it does not require occasional duties in such circumstances. He came, says he, to pay his people's debt of obedience and punishment. I answer: Occasional duties without a call, are a branch of no man's debt of any kind, for the law does not require them in such a case. He came, adds he, to furnish his people with a bright and perfect example of all moral duty. I still reply: To perform occasional duties without a call, is no branch of a perfect example, but the very reverse. The law does not require them in such a case; and either the law must be imperfect, or the example imperfect, seeing they correspond not: my friend may chuse which he pleases. He further insinuates, that if covenanting is a moral duty, it is a branch of the worship due to God by the law. I reply: True it is so, if there is a call in providence. But if there is no call, Sir, the law does not require occasional duties, and to perform them, is to do more than the law requires, in such circumstances: you may call it what you please. If occasional duties without a call, are a branch of worship due by the law, as your argument imports; the obvious consequence is, that to do what the law requires not, is a branch of worship due by the law, for it does not require

occasional duties in such a case. He much questions, if doctrine more absurd and impious, was ever taught by the woman that sits upon the scarlet-coloured beast. As you are so often at Rome, Sir, with a load of detested Seceders on your back, as a present to his holiness, it would perhaps be arrogant to suppose, that any Protestant in Europe, is equally acquainted with the doctrines of the *venerable strumpet*. But you need not go far, to find doctrine rather as absurd and impious, *viz.* that *disregarding* the law, is a branch of the worship due to God by the law. On this, and the former particular, we have little else, except *impious, absurd, blasphemous, the scarlet coloured beast*. My friend has always a group of such arguments at hand, equally applicable to every topic. A kail-wife could have furnished you, Sir, with an hundred more of the same kind, as sensible, and expressed with equal fluency.—On this particular, my opponent is chargeable with the following errors.

1 He is again chargeable with maintaining, that there can be no complete obedience to the law, without doing that which the law does not require, *viz.* performing occasional duties, without a call in providence.

2. That our debt of obedience could not be answered, unless occasional duties were performed, *without a call*, which is a branch of no man's debt or duty in *such a case*.

3. That Christ could not leave his people a perfect pattern, unless he furnished them with an example, of setting aside the law as their rule, and performing occasional duties, *when* the law does not require them. I am charged,

Sixthly, With a medley of confusion, and gross error, the native consequence; founded on these words, *Moral duties are binding on all, which is not the case with occasional duties*.—I had mentioned the distinction between *moral* and *positive, stated* and *occasional* duties; with other particulars concerning them, almost to a nuisance, and in the very page from which he quotes. No man of common sense could expect, that every sentence was to be larded with all these distinctions. In the words quoted by him, I allude unto the distinction between *STATED* and *OCCASIONAL* moral duties. I allow, that there are *stated* moral duties which are binding on *all persons*, or every individual:



but maintain, that there are *occasional* moral duties, which an individual is not bound to perform without others in connection with him.

Mr. Hutchison had asserted, that moral duties which are *public*, or *even national* are binding on *all persons* as well as *nations*. His quotation is a part of my reply. I allow that there are moral duties binding on every individual, and who denies it? But I maintain, that there are *occasional* moral duties which are *public*, or *national*, (the very duties of which he speaks) which an individual is not bound to perform, if no man else will join with him. I mentioned the *national duty* of defending ourselves from the inroads of an invading foe; an individual is not bound to go forth alone and resist them, neither scripture nor common sense require it. Mr. Hutchison mentions this in the preceding part of his pamphlet, and grants it is true. The medly of confusion, is a fact which he cannot deny. Had he quoted the next branch of the sentence, the reader would have seen the meaning at once. ‘Our author may prove, that all these duties which are properly national, are to be performed by an individual, when neglected by the body of the nation.’ To mention this, would have frustrated his criminating design. His quotation is only *one* branch of a sentence, and I have no objection to quoting a single branch of a sentence, when the sense is evident; but to do this in order to conceal the sense, is exceedingly culpable.

It is the whole foundation of this charge; I have not annexed *every* distinction concerning duties, to *every* branch of *every* sentence, he therefore exclaims, a medly of confusion! Had he put the following question to me, it would have expressed the substance of his charge in the most obvious manner. Why did you not lard not only *every* page, not only *every* sentence, but *every branch* of a sentence, with all the circumlocutions, divisions, and distinctions, which you might well know, were indispensibly requisite, when your rear was to be assaulted by such an able, learned, and judicious animadverter? The absurdity of such a method, is obvious to every one. The consequences he mentions, have no title to reply. I know of nothing extant comparable to them, except his learned deduc-

tions annexed to his immortal paraphrase on the xivth of the Romans. He alledges,

1. That I allow, that every moral duty is binding on the Heathen.—I allow, that there are moral duties, (not *every* moral duty) binding on all men, whether Heathen or Christian. I refuse, at the same time, that an individual is bound to perform occasional duties, which are public or national, without others in connection, which he hath asserted, without proof.

2. That I refuse, that public fasting and thanksgiving, are binding on all men: Because I maintain, that there are *occasional public*, or *national* duties, which are not binding on individuals without others in connection. I allow, that an individual may fast *personally* for public sins; and ought to do so, if others will not join with him: But I still maintain, that an individual is not bound, nor can he fast publicly, or in a national capacity, if not another single individual will join with him. Mr. Hutchison may go to church, without elder, reader, sexton, or audience, and bewail the public or national sins as much as he will; but without others to join with him, it is only personal, whether performed in the closet, the kirk, or the mountain top. He asserts,

3. That I deny that covenanting is a moral duty; because I maintain there are *occasional public*, or *national* duties, which an individual is not bound to perform singly by himself; and Mr. Hutchison grants it is true. I still maintain, that an individual may covenant personally, but he is not bound, nor can he covenant publicly, or nationally, without a single individual in connection.—This, Sir, is an age teeming with strange discoveries, you have now heard it again asserted, that an individual is not bound to fast *nationally*, without so much as another individual in connection. You may disprove this if you can, as I apprehend you are the only man in the world, possessed of the penetration to discover the inconsistency between this, and national fasting being binding on all men. On this particular, he is chargeable with maintaining,

1. That if *occasional public*, or national duties are not binding in *every circumstance*, they are binding in no circumstance whatever; because I maintain, that they are not binding

on an individual by himself, they are not, says he, binding at all.

2. He maintains, that a single individual is bound to perform occasional public, or national duties singly by himself. That he is bound to go forth *alone*, and defend the nation from an invading foe. Query? Is he not bound to tempt providence?—My asserting, that an individual is not bound to perform national duties, by himself alone, is the sum of his medly of confusion.—As you conclude this particular with a triple wonder, you cannot be displeas'd, Sir, though I should desire the reader to annex one of them to ignorance, a second to disingenuity, and a third to love of quibbling!!!

I am charg'd with a seventh grievous error, on account of my asserting, concerning the covenant with the Gibeonites, *It is true, it was a positive command to Israel to destroy the Amorites; but the obligation of the oath, or covenant, being moral, the positive must yield to the moral obligation.* Perhaps it may not be disagreeable to the reader, to show, as an evidence of Mr. Hutchison's fortitude; that it is not merely an illiterate Seceder whom he opposes, in refusing the obligation of the Gibeonites covenant. The Gibeonites, by the light of nature, were in no hesitation concerning Joshua's being bound to defend them. Joshua and the princes never questioned the obligation of their oath. The pious bishop Hall observes, although Saul had slain in one day fourscore and five priests of the Lord, who wore a linen ephod, we have no account of the blood of his own priests being enquired after; but the blood of the Amorites, because of the oath of God. Nor have I seen any divine whatever, consider it as a doubtful matter: what wonderful discoveries are now made in our enlightened age! Besides, what ought to be of great weight with Mr. Hutchison and me, our Westminster divines maintain, Confession, chap. xix. sect. 4<sup>th</sup> that an oath is binding to Heretics or Infidels; and Joshua ix. compared with 2 Sam. xxi. is one half of the proof adduced, as the reader will see by consulting the scriptures annexed. Some little deference is certainly due unto our Confession, by these who have publicly declared their solemn approbation of it. My friend stands forth like a modern Athanasius; the analogy is honourable, although I maintain nothing but what



our Confession supports. But above all, Jehovah himself encourages Joshua and the Israelites in fulfilling their oath.

The reader will observe, that the whole of this charge is founded on my asserting, that a *positive* yielded to the *moral obligation* of an oath. Whatever my private sentiments are, concerning the manner of fixing the obligation of an oath or covenant, I have asserted no more than this, that the moral law of God obliges men to keep their oaths: my opponent acknowledges it, and charges me with evading. No consequence therefore can be deduced, from any thing I have asserted, which will not *equally* apply to a *positive* yielding to a *moral obligation*; for this is the undeniable import of the heretical sentence. The Israelites, on one hand, had a *positive* precept to destroy the Amorites; on the other hand, the *moral law* of God, obliging them to keep their oaths and covenants. The plain import of the dreadful error then, is no more than this, a *positive* precept, which respected only a few idolaters in Canaan, yielded to the *moral obligation* binding men to keep their vows and oaths, which extends to every corner of the world, and to deny it, in great measure eversive of the very being of society; just as the positive precept, *On it thou shalt not do any work*, yields to the moral obligation to perform works of *necessity* and *mercy*. If it is alledged, that they sinned in making this covenant; I answer, It does not follow, that on this account its obligation was disannulled. Christians sinned in marrying Heathens in the apostle's days; he exhorts them against it, but did not apprehend that this disannulled the marriage covenant, or that they might depart from them at pleasure.

It is true, as our author observes, that they were drawn into this covenant by guile; so might a Christian be drawn into a marriage with a Heathen by guile: but the one could not disannul the obligation of an oath more than the other. Joshua and the princes sinned in neglecting to ask counsel of God, and taking no time to deliberate till they had satisfying evidences whether the Gibeonites were from a far country or not. But their sin could not disannul the obligation of their oath, any more than the sin of Christians could disannul the marriage vow. If it is alledged, that a moral and positive precept can-

not interfere in reality, the contrary is evident every Sabbath, when works of mercy are requisite.

I shall now proceed to detect his sophistry, in his unnatural unconnected consequences. In order to this, I desire the reader to observe only two particulars.

1. He sets out with asserting, that I set the *deeds of men* in opposition unto, and make them annihilate the *authority of God*. Not one word of this is fact. I only maintain, that a *positive* precept yielded unto the *moral obligation* of the law, which binds men to keep these oaths and covenants which are agreeable to, and founded upon the moral law.

2. Because I allow that our oaths and covenants are obligatory, or that the moral law obliges us to fulfil these covenants, the matter of which is agreeable unto, and founded upon the moral law; he draws the *unnatural consequence*, that we are likewise bound to fulfil these which are directly contrary to the moral law. If I allow, that the moral law obliges me to keep a covenant agreeable to the law, his consequence is, that it must likewise oblige me to keep a covenant directly contrary to the law, than which there cannot be more palpable deceit. These are the foundation of all his shocking consequences.

I maintain, that a positive precept, in a particular instance, yielded unto the *obligation* of the moral law; his absurd consequence is, that I make the deeds of men to annihilate the authority of God. My doctrine, says he, sets aside every positive ordinance under the gospel. You must first prove, Sir, that gospel ordinances interfere with the obligation of the moral law. For I have only maintained, that when a positive precept interferes with moral obligation, that the positive may, and in many cases ought, to yield to the moral obligation. Can you prove the contrary? If you cannot, your consequence is a fiction.—My doctrine, says he, will set aside the whole of divine revelation, because it is positive. You must first prove, that the divine revelation is not only positive, but interferes with the obligation of the moral law, which I hope you will have the prudence to decline. Unless this is the case, I have given no countenance to Deists, as you alledge. But it is clear as broad day, it will deny for no man, that you have performed one half of the work of the ghostly fraternity, as you signi-

ficantly stifle them. You maintain, that every thing *positive* under the Old-Testament, is abrogated under the New. You likewise maintain, that the whole of divine revelation is *positive*. The consequence is plain, as a sun-beam, that all the revelation enjoyed under the Old Testament being positive, is abrogated under the New. You strike off one of the church's breasts with a single stroke, in a manner the Deists could never have thought of: they may find easy work with the other. If a single Relief clergyman can abrogate one half of the scripture at once, who can reasonably blame the Conclave for twisting scripture as they please.

It is now time to consider my opponent's errors, in supporting this particular charge.

1. He maintains, that if an oath bind us; in other words, if the law of God oblige us to keep an oath, the matter of which is *agreeable* to the law; it must also bind us to keep one, the matter of which is directly *contrary* to the law. That if an oath to *keep* the word of God bind us, an oath to *reject* the whole word of God must bind us also. This is error gross enough.

2. That if a *positive precept* may yield to moral obligation, all the *positive ordinances* under the gospel are set aside. — If this is true, gospel ordinances are, beyond all peradventure, superseded. Every Sabbath, a positive precept, *On it thou shalt not do any work*, yields to moral obligation, as often as works of *mercy* are necessary.

3. That all the scriptures of the Old Testament, being *positive*, are now *abrogated* under the New: And Christians, according to our author's doctrine, have *no concern* with the scriptures of the *Old Testament*, as a divine revelation; for, in this view, he maintains they are abrogated. Might he not expect a congratulatory epistle from the Popish and Infidel tribes?

4. That all the Old-Testament *predictions* and *promises*, can be no source of *comfort* to Christians, they are no revelation of mercy to them; for, as a divine revelation, they are now abrogated.

My opponent can be satisfied with nothing less than *plaineſt blasphemy*, as his eighth charge of error, because I assert, that the sinner's convictions before conversion, like his prayers and plowing, are sinful in the sight of God; and reprobated his



*saving* convictions before regeneration. He informs me, that convictions are not the sinner's works, 'but the work of the Spirit of God, operating as a spirit of bondage, carrying home the law upon the sinner's conscience.' I reply; Why then does he stile them the *sinner's* convictions? 'Those, says he, whose convictions are saving.' I must inform him, in my turn, that the *operations* of the Spirit of God are not the *sinner's* convictions. The sinner's convictions are his own inward *distressing apprehensions* of the wrath and curse of God, due unto his sin; in virtue of the law being set home on his conscience by the Spirit of God, as a spirit of bondage. It is the work of the Spirit to awaken the *secure* sinner; but the sinner's convictions are his *alarming apprehensions* of the curse, in virtue of the Spirit's work. To affirm, that the *Spirit's operations* are the *sinner's* convictions, is a downright solecism in language, and absurdity in the extreme. I can freely submit it to the reader, if it is common sense to affirm, that the *Spirit's operations* are the *sinner's* convictions; and if repeating is not refuting. And that these alarming apprehensions are sinful, does not proceed from the Spirit's operations, which are holy, but from the sinner's abuse of them by unbelief: Nor am I alone in asserting, that these convictions before regeneration are sinful. Nothing can be more pertinent to the point in dispute, than the words of Martin Luther, that undaunted champion of reformation \*, 'The fears by which sinners are terrified, either internally by God, or externally by preachers, are sins, till they are overcome by faith.' According to our author's reasoning, if the sinner abuse the Spirit's common operations by unbelief, the Spirit of God must be the author of sin. It is the native consequence of his doctrine, that the holy law of God must undoubtedly be the author of sin. The apostle speaks of *motions of sin by the law*, Rom. vii. 5. Commentators inform us, that the apostle means, that these motions of sin are irritated, provoked, and increased by the law's prohibition. But, says the apostle, ver. 7. 'What shall we then say? is the law sin?' Yes, yes, says Mr. Hutchison; you must maintain, that the law is the author of sin; for the sinner a-

\* History of the Council of Trent, p. 109.

abuses its threatenings and prohibitions by unbelief, as he does the Spirit's common operations. Excellent doctrine ! But says the apostle, *God forbid.*

I may now ask the reader, if he knows where to fix the plainest blasphemy on any thing I have asserted. When my opponent sees meet to vindicate the holy law from being the author of sin, it will render an answer to his charge of making the Spirit the author of it, considerably easy. Our author's doctrine plainly imports, that there is a specific difference between the convictions of the non-elect, and those of the elect before conversion : The first have no *saving* convictions, the last have convictions prior to regeneration, which are *saving*, and issue in conversion sometime or other before their death. When he makes proof of this specific difference, and that it is not the Spirit uniting and working faith which constitutes the saving change, I shall give a further reply to his charge of making the Spirit the author of sin.

Proceed we now to consider the errors which are natively deducible, from what he has advanced, in support of this charge.

1. He maintains, that the Spirit's operations, are the sinner's convictions ; whereas his convictions are his own alarming apprehensions of the curse.

2. That there is something which is saving in the nature of it, wrought in the sinner, before the Spirit's union and faith.

3. That the law of God is the author of sin, for sinners abuse its threatenings and prohibitions, by unbelief, as they do the Spirit's common operations.

His ninth charge of error, is founded on these words, *Faith and repentance are certainly duties required ; but if ever we expect to exercise them, in a gospel manner, we must view them as blessings freely promised.* As this is almost the only particular, in which he attacks me on the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, the reader may expect a specimen of my opponent's accurate and extensive views of gospel grace.

His first remark is my uncouth phraseology, *exercising the duties of faith and repentance.* But whether are these words yours, Sir, or mine ? I speak of *exercising* faith and repent-

ance; *duties* is a *supplement* of your own. Besides, you will probably allow, that the duties of faith and repentance are to be *performed*; will you inform us, how we may *perform* without *exercising*, or *exercise* without *performing*.

2. I deliver pretty extraordinary doctrine, *We must view the duties of faith and repentance, as blessings freely promised.* 'This, says he, I utterly deny.' He might justly have added, and proclaim my own ignorance of the extent of the promises and grace of the gospel. I did not assert formerly, that we are to view the *duties* of faith and repentance as promised blessings; but I now *positively* assert it; and my friend may be very certain, that Seceders are not accustomed to consider this as very extraordinary doctrine. The promises of the gospel contain not only the *grace*, but the *duty* also. I ask, is it duty, *to walk in God's statutes, to keep his judgments, to walk up and down in his name?* The reader may consult, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A new heart also will I give you,' &c. including every grace; but it follows, ver. 27. 'I will put my Spirit within you, and *cause* you to walk in my statutes, and ye *shall* keep my judgments, and *do* them;' including every duty. Here then, we have not only *grace*, but *every duty* of the Christian life also, made over in a free and unconditional promise. Zech. x. 12. 'I will strengthen them in the Lord;' including all needful grace; but it follows, *They shall walk up and down* in his name, saith the Lord;' summary of every duty.—It were easy to multiply quotations, but I see no occasion for it, although my friend alledge, that these promises, like the rest of the Old Testament, are now brogated; since the apostle asserts, not only, that it is God who works in his people *to will*, including every grace; but also *to do*, including every duty. A gracious God has manifested his unbeginning and self-moved love, in securing, by his faithful promise, not only all needful grace to his people, but likewise the suitable exercise of it, in the conscientious discharge of every commanded duty. The promise cannot contain the exercise of grace, without containing duty also; for the exercise of grace conferred, is our unquestionable duty. Will my opponent alledge, that it is not his duty to exercise grace



conferred; or that grace is secured by the promise, but the exercise of it left to himself?

These are sentiments, which Mr. Hutchison *utterly denies*; and, according to his doctrine, the promise contains only the grace, or the *spiritual ability*, as he afterward styles it. It is the sum of his gospel on this particular, Give me the grace, or the *spiritual ability*; set me where Adam was, and I will manage my stock to better purpose: I have no occasion for a promise, with my duty in its bosom, to secure the performance of it. He considers all that doctrine as extraordinary, which does not correspond with the prodigal son's request, 'Give me my portion of goods;' I will manage it at pleasure.—If this is either the purity of gospel doctrine, or the extent of the gospel promise, I never understood it. In vain will he attempt to distinguish between *duty*, and the *performance* of it; and that though the promise contain the *performance*, the duty is contained only in the law precept. If the promise contain the *performance* of duty, it contains something more than the spiritual ability to which he confines it. Besides, the gospel promise contains the very thing *itself*, required by the law-precept. The Saviour informs us, Mat. xxii. 37. That it is the sum of first-table duty, to 'love the Lord our God with *all our heart and soul.*' Agreeable to this, the promise contains the very thing *itself*, required by the law; Deut. xxx. 6. 'And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart,—to love the Lord thy God, with *all thine heart*, and with *all thy soul.*' It is the law demand, 'Make you a *new heart*, and a *new spirit.*' Ezek. xviii. 31. But the gospel promise contains the very thing itself, required by the precept; Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A *new heart* also will I give you; and a *new spirit* will I put within you.'—It is idle to multiply quotations, where the scripture is so express. It is no small source of comfort to the godly, that the law-precept and the gospel-promise exactly correspond.

3. 'To view the duties of faith and repentance, says he, as blessings freely promised, is absurd and unscriptural.' The reader may judge by the preceding quotations, if it is unscriptural; and if it is not, it cannot be absurd. I add, a dejected soul may sometimes increase the inward disquietude, by

reasoning thus: ' I see all needful grace in the promise ; but, ' alas ! I have a deceitful unbelieving heart ; I will misimprove ' the grace, and neglect the duty.'—I know some would tell him, here is the free promise, containing not only the *grace*, but the *duty* also in the bosom of it ; ' I will *cause* you to walk ' in my statutes, ye *shall* keep my judgments, and *do* them ;' and desire him to turn the eye of faith to such faithful promises. No, says my friend, at your peril look at such promises, it is absurd and unscriptural to alledge, that your duty is contained in a promise. The reader may judge which of these is most unscriptural.

4. He alledges, ' I cannot well distinguish between the ' *graces* of the Spirit, and *duties* of the law.' I apprehend, that neither of us have much reason to boast of what we can distinguish ; there are ministers of different denominations, who can easily see both his weakness and mine. He must inform me, however, ' That faith and repentance, as *graces* and ' *duties*, are quite *distinct* from one another.' This I utterly deny ; he is grossly mistaken. I maintain, that faith and repentance, as *graces* and *duties*, are only considered in a *distinct* view, but are themselves *identically* the same. Will he affirm, that it is *one* faith which is required by the law, and a *quite distinct* one which is promised in the gospel? Is it *one* faith which is contained in the command, ' Look unto me and be ' ye saved ;' and a *quite distinct* one contained in the promise, ' They shall look unto me whom they have pierced ?' Is it *one* repentance contained in the command, ' Turn ye, turn ' ye ; why will ye die ?' and a *quite distinct* one contained in the promise, ' They shall mourn.' The gospel-promise and law-precept can never correspond, if the faith and repentance required by the one, and made over in the other, are quite distinct from one another. They are identically the same, only considered in a distinct point of view : It would seem my friend cannot well distinguish between things which are distinct *in themselves*, and a *distinct* view of them. As well may he affirm, that Mr. Hutchison is a *quite distinct* man when he looks at the law, and when he looks at the gospel : Or, which is perhaps more applicable, that the *same round sum* is quite distinct, required of him, or promised to him ; the sum

is identically the same, whether promised, or required. So is it with faith and repentance; for, as face answers to face in the glass, so do the promises of the gospel, answer to the precepts of the law as the Christian's rule. I may inform him, that it is the uniform doctrine of Calvinists, that the law-precept and gospel-promise, exactly correspond.

5. 'As duties, says he, they point out what the law of God *requires*; and as graces, they are that *spiritual ability* which the soul receives from above, to believe and repent, as the law commands.' Without animadverting on his uncouth phraseology, that *faith* and *repentance*, as graces in the promise, are only *ability* to *believe* and *repent*; I observe, our author is generally a strenuous advocate for the perfection of the law, the reader will therefore be surpris'd to find him attacking the sacred perfection of the divine law. He maintains, that faith and repentance are quite *distinct*, as contained in the law-*precept*, and the gospel-*promise*. He likewise maintains, that as *spiritual ability* for duty, they are contained in the promise; and therefore, according to his doctrine, as the *spiritual ability* for duty, they cannot be contained in the precept of the law. The obvious and undeniable consequence is, that the law does not require the *spiritual ability* for duty, it is contained only in the promise. But man was furnished with ability in his federal Head, he bereaved himself of it, by his apostacy in the first Adam, and the law requires him to restore what he has impiously taken away, *viz.* his spiritual ability with which he was furnished in his federal Head. If faith and repentance are the spiritual ability for duty, in this very view they are required by the holy law. When the law requires the sinner to make to himself a new heart, can you distinguish between this; Sir, and requiring spiritual ability for duty? Spiritual ability for duty, consisting in the being and strength of every grace, is one principal branch of the *moral image* of God, drawn upon the soul; do you apprehend, that there is any branch of the moral image of God, which is not required by the exceeding broad commandment? If this is not to infringe the sacred perfection of the divine law, I know not what can be so. If he alledge, that he does not mean to refuse, that the law requires the *spiritual ability*, why then does



he vent his disdainful information, by distinctions where he can make no difference? The *spiritual ability* is required by the law, as well as promised in the gospel.

I cannot refrain, Sir, from tendering my former advice anew, that you would take some time to converse with your neighbouring Seceding ministers, concerning the perfection of the law, and peculiar doctrines of the gospel; for such a group of absurdity, treading upon the heels of absurdity, in half a page, is rarely to be met with.

I shall now mention the errors my friend has broached on this particular.

1. To walk in God's statutes, is not our duty, for it is contained in the promise. There cannot be a more native consequence of his doctrine.

2. Sinners need only grace, or ability for duty, but have no need of a promise with duty in its bosom, to secure the performance of duty.

3. Sinners must not look to a promise with duty included in it; it is absurd.

4. It is ONE faith and repentance contained in the promise, and a QUITE DISTINCT one required by the precept; and the gospel-promise does not correspond with the law-precept. It has hitherto been matter of comfort to the godly, that the very thing required of them by the law, is freely promised to them in the gospel. To maintain, that it is one *faith* and *repentance*, required by the law; and a *quite distinct* faith and repentance promised by the gospel; is an indication of mournful ignorance of both law and gospel. Who would not commiserate the poor people, who are usually entertained with such doctrines?

5. The law does not require spiritual ability, or to restore what we have impiously taken away; and principal branches of God's moral image, which are not required by the exceeding broad commandment.

His last charge of error, is founded on these words, *Pardon is granted, and all the graces of the Spirit implanted, at the same instant; and perhaps no great propriety in saying, first this and then that.* 'This, says he, is true, neither in divinity, nor philosophy.' The reader will observe, that I speak of

pardon being *granted*; my opponent of pardon *obtainsd*. Till he prove an act; or the exercise of faith before God's grant of pardon, I have no concern with him. Had he satisfied himself with an *order of nature*, with respect to *faith* and *pardon*, our dispute was ended. But, 'an act of faith, therefore, at least must intervene, says he, between the *implantation* of faith, and the obtaining of pardon, *but every act is in time*.' Now, if his intervening period is fixed, between the *implantation*, and the *first act* of faith; I reply, that no time can intervene, between the *implantation* and *first act* of faith. The reader, I suppose, will allow, that there is no impropriety in asserting, that a man opens his eyes in the clear day, and beholds the light at the very *same time*. In the very opening of them, he beholds the light, an order of nature, but not of time: In like manner, the *implantation* of faith, is just an opening of the sinner's eyes, *in a spiritual sense*, the scripture expressly styles it so, 'To open their eyes,' &c.; and in the very opening of them, at the very *same instant*, the sinner beholds the Sun of righteousness. No intervening time, therefore, between the *implantation*, and *first act* of faith.

His philosophical *period of time*, must therefore be allotted to the *first act of faith itself*, before the receiving or obtaining of pardon. But neither will this support his quibble at the commonly received doctrine of Calvinists. I demand a proof, that a certain portion of *time* is employed in the *first act* of faith, *before* receiving or obtaining of pardon; or, that the sinner acts faith for a *time*, before the receiving of pardon.

The *first act* of faith is a receiving of pardon; it is neither *before*, nor *after*, but *in* the *first act* of faith, that the sinner first receives pardon; an order of nature, but not of time. He assures us, that the *first act* of faith *is in time*, but forgets to prove, that the granting and obtaining of pardon cannot be at the *same time*: you must take his assertion for proof. Can you inform us, *how long a time* the sinner acts faith before the receiving of pardon? In other words, *how long* he receives pardon before he receive it: for the very *first act* of faith is a receiving of pardon.—It requires a much surer head than yours, Sir, for enabling a man to apply philosophical quibbles to gospel doctrines, without landing himself in such gross ab-

furdities. You may amuse yourself with describing the intervening time, between pulling off your hat and your head being uncovered; the one the cause, the other the *instantaneous* effect: an order of nature, but not of time. It is true, that *every act is in time*; but you should have proved much better than you have done, that no other blessing can be conferred, at the *same time* with the *first act* of faith, before you stated the opposite doctrine among your decalogue of errors.

Here I may observe, as his philosophical *portion of time* seems to be assigned to the first act of faith, before the believer receive or obtain pardon; he is chargeable with maintaining, that a sinner may enjoy the Spirit's *union*, the being, and acting of faith, and of consequence, real holiness; but may, in this situation, *for a time*, be exposed to endless wo, because he has not received or obtained pardon. I ask, how should the sinner be disposed of, if death should arrest him, *in your philosophical period*? In virtue of the Spirit's union, faith, and holiness, he enjoys heaven in the beginning of it, for grace is glory in the bud; but during the *philosophical period*, he has not received pardon, and is liable to everlasting wo. Would a purgatory be necessary, Sir?—I asserted nothing on this article, but the common doctrine of Calvinists, and you make a pretty figure at overturning it.

I have now canvassed his charge of *gross error*, and the whole amount of it is as follows. 1. I have asserted, that the ceremonial and moral law were distinct. 2. That the Heathens are not bound to believe on a Saviour, of whom they never heard, and who was never in their offer. 3. That divine teaching is not a mere figurative expression, and that the Most High may prescribe ways for his people, without being himself possessed of a bodily form. 4. That there are some moral duties which the Saviour did not perform, because he had no call to do so; a doctrine which Mr. Hutchison grants is true, but he would not maintain it for the whole world. 5. That to perform occasional duties, without a call in providence, is to do more than the law requires in such circumstances. 6. That there are occasional national duties, which an individual is not bound to perform, without others in connexion. 7. That a positive precept may sometimes yield to moral obligation. 8.



That the Spirit's operations are not the sinner's convictions, but his convictions are his own alarming apprehensions of the curse. 9. That the promise contains both grace and duty; 'a new heart will I give you,—and cause you to keep my 'statutes.' 10. When every grace is implanted in the soul, the sinner is not a *single moment*, after this, liable to the curse; for pardon is granted at the same instant.—All this Mr. Hutchison reprobates as error, and gross error: and I leave the reader to judge, if his own hands have not made the snares wherewith he is caught.—In opposing these unquestionable truths, he has vented triple the number of errors.

He informs his reader, that these errors are not taught by the Relief clergy. I reply; These are not the only gospel truths, it would seem, which are not taught by the Relief clergy; for, according to Mr. Hutchison's defence of their doctrine, if they do not expressly contradict the counsel of God, they may conceal as much of it as they will. Nor by those, says he, of the Established Church. I hope there are yet some in the Established Church, who will maintain every one of these truths, which he has, in vain, attempted to impugn. He has miscarried egregiously in *heresy-hunting*; but has succeeded to admiration in *heresy-vending*.

## S E C T. IX.

*The Relief Scheme divested of these things which are none of its Peculiarities.*

I Shall now conclude this performance, by giving the Reader a view of the Relief scheme, divested of these things which are none of its peculiarities, but common to the Relief and other denominations. My opponent in his first attack upon the Secession, *set out* with an attempt to strip the Secession scheme of those things which, he asserted, were none of its peculiarities. It cannot therefore be deemed either rude or unmannerly, although I should *conclude*, by making a trial how the Relief will bear the same treatment: And I shall study brevity.

1. The doctrines of free grace, reigning through a Redeemer's blood and righteousness, are none of the peculiarities of

the Relief scheme. There are several other bodies of dissenters, who are full as much distinguished in this respect. Our author, in his first publication, claims only the *capital* and *fundamental* truths.

2. To maintain, that the Presbyterian church government is the form of government which God has appointed for the new-testament church, is no peculiarity of the Relief scheme. The rest of the Presbyterian dissenters maintain, that it is the *only* form appointed for the new-testament church.

3. To approve of the Westminster Confession of faith as agreeable unto, and founded upon the word of God; and as the confession of our faith, is none of the Relief peculiarities. This is done in the Establishment, and by Presbyterian dissenters in general. Mr. Hutchison informs his reader, that all the Relief ministers solemnly acknowledge the same as the Confession of their faith. So far it is good. But although I am satisfied, that our Confession does not contain bloody principles, if the reader compare Mr. Hutchison's doctrine of toleration, with chap. xxiii. of the Confession, 'That it is the magistrate's duty to take order,—that blasphemies and heresies be suppressed,' I apprehend he will soon be convinced, that it is difficult to understand how Mr. Hutchison could approve of it without a necessary salvo, *viz.* errors excepted. Mr. Hutchison's doctrine of an active and unbounded toleration, extending to every thing in religion which depraved nature can devise, is a direct charging of our Confession with bloody Popish principles.

4. To maintain, the Christian people's right to chuse their own pastors, is no branch of the Relief peculiar scheme. This is maintained in principle by a number of ministers in the established church; and both in principle and practice by all the different denominations of Presbyterian dissenters. It is true, our author charges Seceders with infringing the people's liberty of choice, because they do not allow them to chuse their ministers out of a different denomination, and of different principles from themselves. This deserves no reply. I never in my life, Sir, heard of any restriction to their own denomination, at the moderation of a call among Seceders, though I must be so free as to assure you, that if there was any occasion

for it, it would certainly be done. But our people have more common sense, than to connect themselves with us, and declare their approbation of our principles, while they wish to choose their ministers from another denomination, and of different principles. According to my opponent's doctrine, the people's freedom of choice is restricted, unless they are allowed to choose an Independent, English Curate, or Roman Catholic. But if the people may lawfully choose a minister of such principles; the Relief ministers may lawfully ordain him, if nothing impede but his particular principles, which were well known before the choice, and accordingly our author's scheme is not Presbyterian: Nay, it is not Protestant; for if the people may lawfully call a Papist; ministers may lawfully ordain him; but if the people are restricted from the first, says my friend, their freedom of choice is infringed.

If our author maintain, that the people have a liberty to choose a minister of any principles whatever; but the Relief presbytery will ordain, only as they see cause; I ask; what then does the people's liberty of choice avail them? their courts have a negative over them; they have only got a number of ecclesiastical patrons, in place of a civil one. It is true, that circumstances may occur, between the call and ordination, which were unknown, both to ministers and people, before the moderation, on account of which, the courts may justly refuse to ordain, or the people drop their call. But if nothing of this sort intervene, if it is lawful for the people to choose, it must be lawful for ministers to ordain. I know no objection to this, unless it be urged, that the people may lawfully call an ordained minister, and the courts may lawfully refuse to transport him. The reply is easy: The courts refuse not, because transportation is unlawful in the general, but because it is not expedient, or for general edification in the particular circumstantiated case. They maintain, that transportation is lawful in the general, but that they have a power to judge of expediency, and edification in a particular case. If transportation were unlawful in the general, it were likewise unlawful for the people to call an ordained minister. The obvious consequence with respect to our author's scheme is this, that it is lawful in the general, for the Relief people to call, and



the Relief ministers to *ordain* a Papist, *only* their courts have power to judge of expediency in a particular circumstantiated case. How to divest his scheme of Popery, is not easy to conceive.—I shall pass it, however, as I expect it will be canvassed to purpose by another hand. And whether the Relief people have enjoyed the freedom of choice in a variety of instances, seems as yet to be problematical.

5. To mingle Baxterian, Neonomian, and Arminian tenets, with the doctrines of the gospel;—although it has been done by ministers in the Relief connection, both from pulpit and press;—is no branch of their peculiar scheme; for this is done by numbers in the present age.

6. To maintain an unbounded active toleration, that it is the duty of the civil magistrate positively to enact and declare unto his subjects, that they may maintain, Socinian, Arian, Deistical, idolatrous, blasphemous principles; that they may worship stocks and stones, departed saints and angels; yea, and devils, if they will, and have as much of his countenance and encouragement, as in maintaining the doctrines of salvation, and worshipping the God of heaven: That the revenues of the kingdom shall be as cheerfully expended by him in rearing temples for the Queen of heaven, as places of worship for the living God: That he is determined to spare ail whom the Almighty spares, and because he has spared robbers and murderers, he is determined to spare them also: It is not peculiar to the Relief, nor even to Mr. Hutchison to maintain such principles, it is done by many in this golden Æra of Christian liberty.

It will perhaps now be enquired, is there any thing at all which is peculiar to the Relief, by which they may be distinguished from other denominations? I reply: That I know nothing peculiar to the Relief, but that which Mr. Hutchison reprobates, in the Chappel scheme, as a direct breach of the second commandment: I mean, admitting to sealing ordinances, those who stand connected with other denominations, and to whom they can exercise no discipline, however much their after-carriage should require it: Or, Relief connections receiving sealing ordinances from ministers of other denominations, who cannot administer discipline to them, however much

they may afterward expose themselves thereto. This is the very *sum* and *essence* of any thing peculiar to the Relief, either admitting others to whom they can administer no discipline; or being admitted by others, who can administer no discipline to them. Our author, p. 209. of his *Delineation*, speaking of the Chappel of Ease, ‘ This scheme, says he, presents us ‘ with a number of ministers, who have the power of doctrine ‘ in the church of Christ, but not of discipline.’ And, in the following page, he asserts, in the most positive manner, ‘ That ‘ it is a direct breach of the second command.’ And in express terms asserts, ‘ That it is not one whit better than Popery, for ‘ this reason, that it *separates parts of the New-Testament ministry.*’ Although our author’s language is severe, his reasoning appears to me unanswerable; and therefore it natively follows, that as far as any minister, or body of ministers, separate parts of the New-Testament ministry, so far they are chargeable, if not with Popery, with that which is not one whit better, a direct breach of the second commandment.—Now, I wish the reader to consider deliberately, if he can refuse, that both administering *sealing ordinances*, and the *discipline* of the house of God, are each of them parts of the New-Testament ministry, and as closely connected as the *doctrine* and *discipline* are.

I have shown, in a former publication, that *doctrine*, *sealing ordinances*, and *discipline*, are all included in one single injunction, ‘ Feed the church of God.’ Mr. Hutchison himself being judge then, to separate between the administration of sealing ordinances and discipline, these confessed parts of the New-Testament ministry, is not one whit better than Popery, a direct breach of the second commandment.—I likewise desire the reader to consider deliberately, if he can point out another particular, which is peculiar to the Relief, except *admitting*, or *being* admitted where discipline cannot be exercised, and these parts of the New-Testament ministry separated.

The Chappel scheme separates these parts of the New-Testament ministry with every communicant; the Relief scheme as effectually separates them, as far as its peculiarity reaches, in admitting, or being admitted, where no discipline can be administered. When persons of other denominations are ad-

mitted by the Relief, they can administer no discipline to them ; and these parts of the New-Testament ministry are undeniably separated : In like manner, ministers of other denominations can administer no discipline to Relief connections, whom they admit to sealing ordinances, and these parts of the New-Testament ministry evidently separated.—As FAR, therefore, as the Relief peculiarity extends, so FAR these branches of the gospel ministry are separated ; and Mr. Hutchison himself being judge, no better than Popery, and a direct breach of the second commandment.—I am neither conscious of humour, nor an inclination to rage or revile, but assert, in the most dispassionate manner, that after the coolest deliberation, I can know nothing the generation are wondering after, but a direct breach of the moral law, Mr. Hutchison being judge.

I shall be very glad to see my opponent point out any thing else peculiar to his scheme, except admitting, and being admitted where discipline cannot take place : And to see him evince, that this does not, as far as the Relief peculiarity extends, as effectually separate these things which God has joined, as the Chappel scheme does, and therefore a direct breach of the second commandment.

Perhaps it may be objected, that the Relief ministers exercise discipline among their own connections, but the Chappel ministers have no such power ; and therefore to reason from the one to the other, is not conclusive. I reply ; This only aggravates their guilt, if they are vested with a power to preserve all the branches of the New-Testament ministry, in their scripture connection, but *voluntarily* separate them. This is likewise a sufficient reply to another objection, *viz.* That separating between the administration of sealing ordinances and discipline, is not peculiar to the Relief ; that in this, they are even exceeded by the Chappel ministers. The reply is obvious : The Chappel ministers, I apprehend, would willingly administer discipline, when necessary, to these whom they admit to sealing ordinances, but their superiors will not permit. But the Relief ministers *voluntarily*, and without any valid reason, admit these to sealing ordinances, to whom, they well know, they can administer no discipline afterward, however necessary. It may therefore be justly stiled their peculiarity, as of *free*



*choice*, they separate these things which God has joined, and GLORY in it!

It will perhaps be objected, that to refuse any of the godly, of whatever denomination, admission to sealing ordinances, is directly contrary to that important article of the Christian faith, *the communion of saints*. This is a very noisy argument with some of our friends in the Relief; but it is only an ignorant confounding of church-fellowship, and the communion of saints, as Mr. Hutchison does, *Animad.* p. 94. It is obvious to every one, that sitting at one communion table, is only circumstantial, and can be no way essential to the communion of saints. The communion of saints, in all the essentials of it, is, and must in the very nature of things be, enjoyed by the church Catholic; although, instead of sitting down at one communion table, they are distant from one another as the ends of the earth. All the saints of the Most High have communion with one another, in one God their Father, one Son their Saviour, one holy Spirit their Sanctifier and Comforter; one faith, one baptism, one imputed righteousness, one heavenly inheritance. They have likewise communion in one another's prayers, and good wishes, wishing well to all these who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity; and as far as they have opportunity, they have communion also in doing well, or in mutual offices of kindness, sympathising with one another amidst every thing which passes over them in this land of estrangement; rejoicing with these who rejoice, and weeping with these who weep.

These, and the like particulars, include the very essentials of the communion of saints, and their not sitting down at one communion table, cannot, in the least degree, impede the enjoyment of it. Misguided zeal, bigotry, and party fury, among different denominations, may be very prejudicial unto the suitable improvement of the sacred privilege; but their not sitting down at one communion table cannot interrupt it.—I desire our author to prove, that sitting down together at a communion table is, any how, essential to the communion of saints, and that it does not properly belong to church-fellowship. When a mere circumstantial at most, is preferred to preserving the ordinances of God entire, and not separating

what God has joined; this is not to *improve*, but to *abuse* the communion of saints.

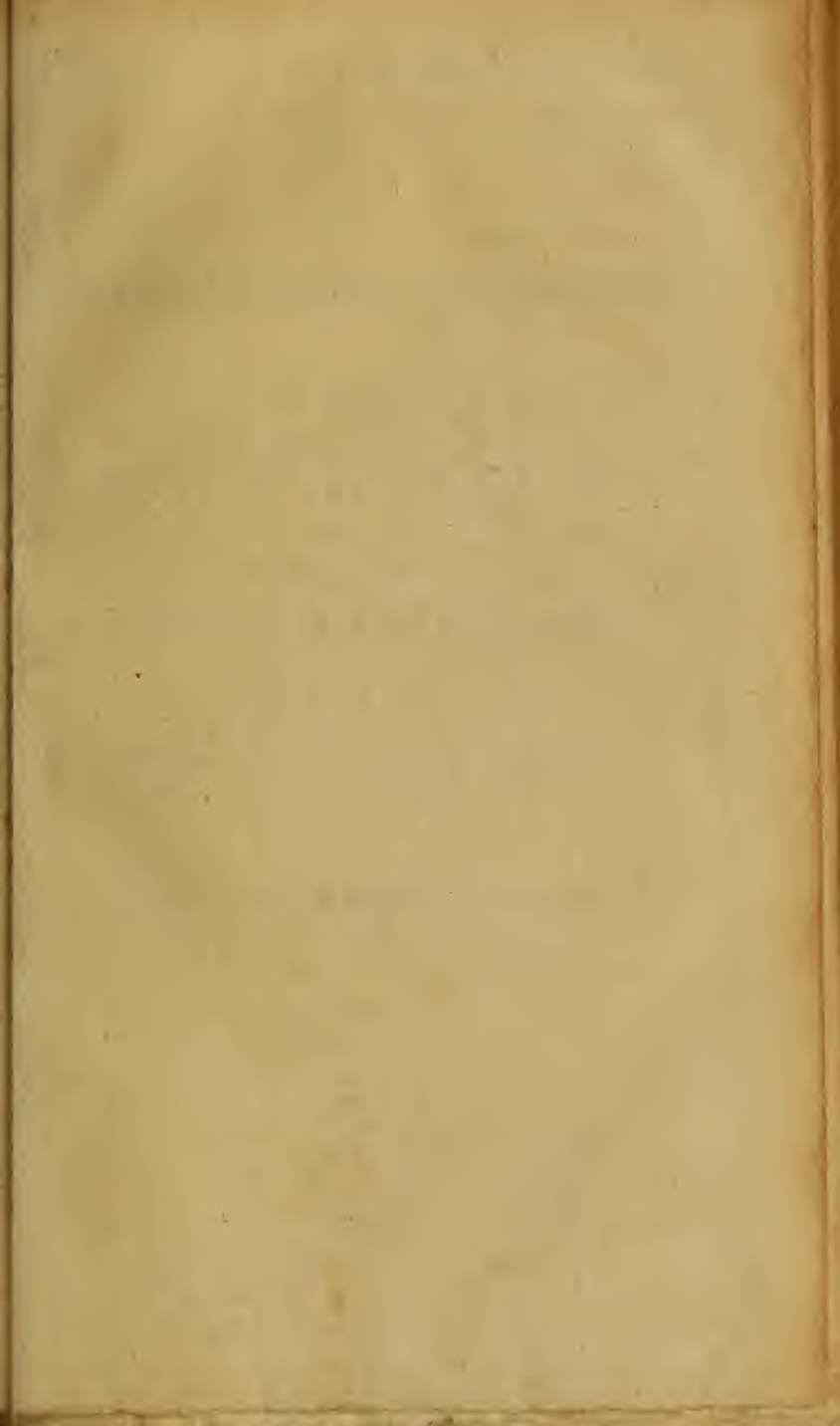
I heartily wish our Relief friends would consider these things deliberately; to embark in a scheme which has nothing peculiar, except a separating the ordinances of God, is at least very inconsiderate. I would still expect, that they may in time be convinced of the inconsistency of it; as it is said, that they have now given up with *visible saintship*, as their comprehensive term of communion, on which our author expatiated so much in a former publication. It is said, they have now judicially determined to admit none to sealing ordinances, who continue in connection with intruders. But however difficult to account for, it will not deny, that there are some, almost at every corner, whose doctrinal sentiments, and tender conversation are such, that only the most detested bigotry could exclude them from the list of visible saints; but still they hang on in connection with these, who received their charge, not only without the call, but in direct opposition to the inclinations of the people. We will no more be dunned with *visible saintship*; and it may be expected, that they will yet see the inconsistency of admitting these to whom they cannot exercise discipline, be it as necessary as it will. Whatever be the consequence in this respect, the Relief scheme divested of these things which are none of its peculiarities, is neither more nor less, than a separating between sealing ordinances, and the discipline of the house of God. Whether the prevalence of this scheme, its being admired and applauded by the generation, is an evidence of reformation, or of confusion, and losing sight entirely of Presbyterian principles, the reader must judge for himself. I have set every one of Mr. Hutchison's arguments against covenanting, in what appeared to me, their most native and obvious meaning, and exposed the weakness of them in such a manner, as may be evident to persons of the meanest capacity. It is true, that a number of my brethren could have answered him, with less toil, and to much better purpose; but as he is no formidable foe, if *sounds* and *sense* are distinguished, I saw no difficulty at all in answering. I have likewise exposed the fallacy of his quibbling, in support of their doctrinal errors; have shown that he is now well nigh being a staunch covenanter, and re-

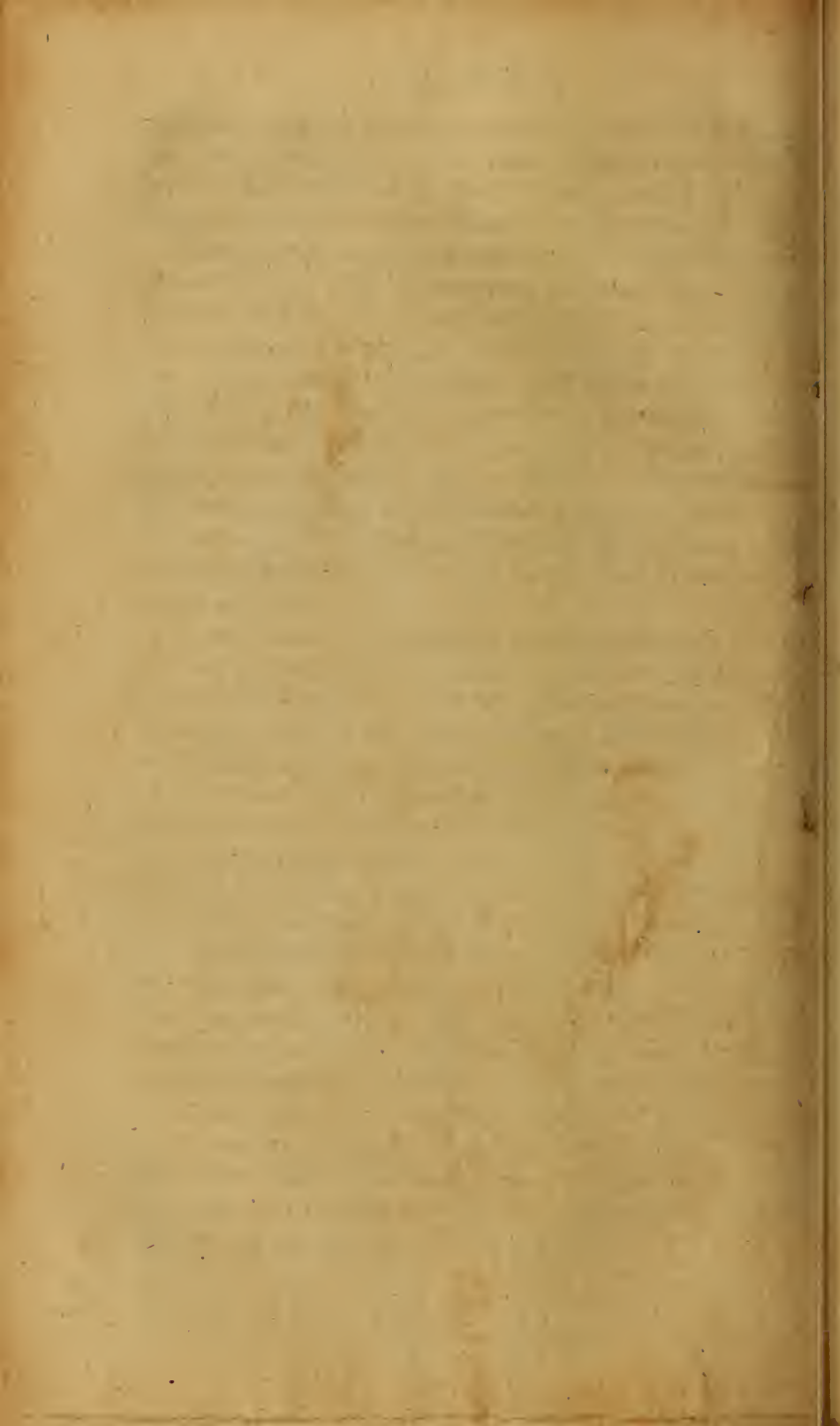
pelled his charge of bloody principles; shown, that in charging me with ten imaginary, he has vented triple the number of real errors; have exhibited the Relief scheme divested of its peculiarities; and the whole is submitted to the impartial reader.

I have now once and again answered, not only his arguments *few and feeble*; but his numerous assertions also, and have followed him foot for foot through all his extraneous stories, and inconnected ramblings. Should he deign to answer me, and a reply be thought necessary, I shall adopt a different plan, easier for myself, and more agreeable to the reader. I mean to select from his answer, only these things which have some appearance of argument, and to subjoin a compendious view of covenanting, with Mr. Hutchison's arguments against it, and the answers, all in a few pages, and so obvious, that persons of the weakest capacities, may have a distinct view of the whole subject.

He concludes, by wishing me better qualifications for writing, and that all good may attend me. Charity obliges me to believe him in earnest. I bid him adieu, at the time, wishing him every personal and family blessing; and success in every undertaking, consistent with the truths of the gospel, and welfare of the souls of men: And if he again appear from the press, that his uncommon talents for writing, in his own opinion at least, may be employed in a better cause. If soaring sounds, and creeping sense, crippled premises, with sturdy extensive conclusions, constitute a masterly writer, no man can refuse, that my friend has a double title.—If ever the reader meet with me again from the press, I heartily wish it may be on a more agreeable subject, affording more opportunity for recommending, and enforcing the doctrines of free grace, as the appointed mean for promoting vital practical godliness. If these sheets are in any measure serviceable for establishing truth, and promoting the interests of religion, by preserving some from wandering from the good old paths, or embracing the humour of the day for their rule, instead of the unerring oracles, the author's end is so far gained.

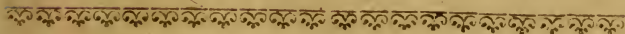








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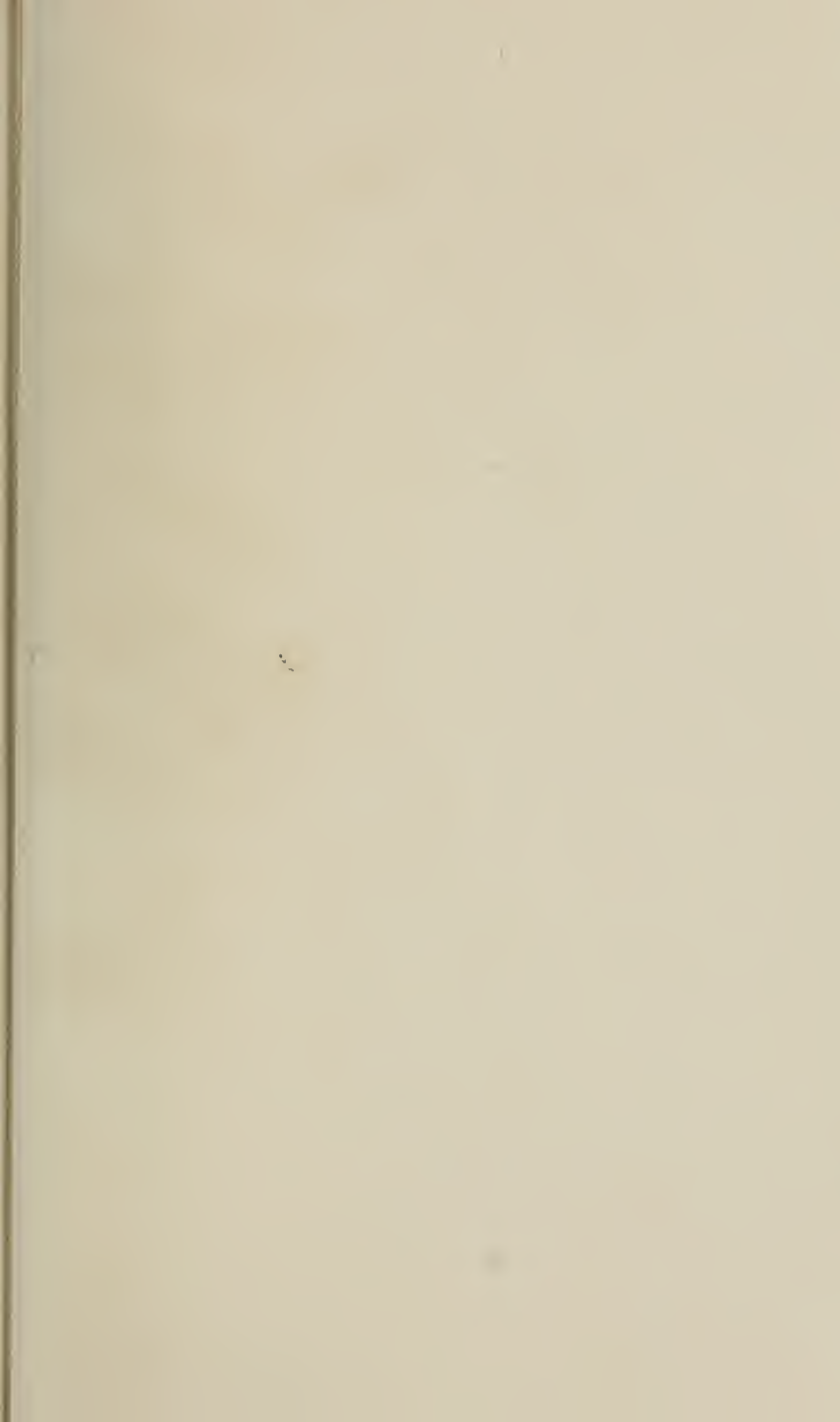
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